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BY

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NEW YORK

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

1923



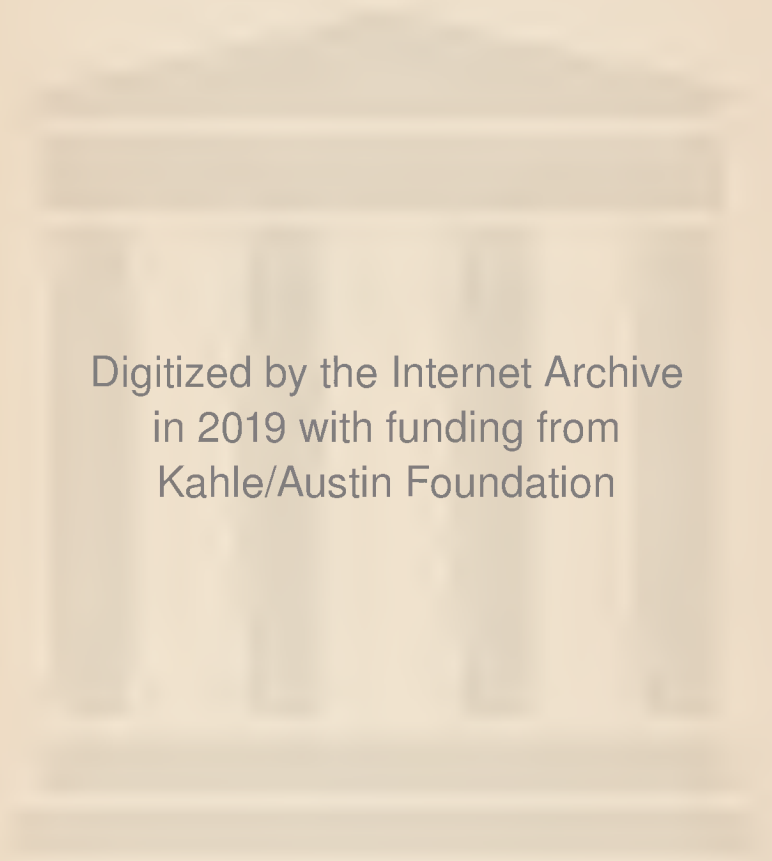
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TO
CHARLES SCRIBNER



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PREFACE

These articles appeared in *Scribner's Magazine* from September 1922 to August 1923. They are here reprinted with hardly any alterations, as they constitute a record of monthly impressions. I wish to thank the numerous readers of the *Magazine* who have sent me valuable and interesting letters.

W. L. P.

Yale University
Tuesday, 7 August 1923

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I

SEPTEMBER is the month of academic beginnings, as June is filled with the reverberations of commencement oratory and the music of wedding-bells. When one reflects on the enormous amount of excellent advice released not only in baccalaureate sermons but by high-school seniors, one cannot help wondering why more of it is not translated into conduct. The boys and girls who "speak their pieces" to vast audiences in the assembly-halls invariably preach idealism—courage in public life, altruism in business, nobility in human relations, purity in heart. What a cold shock it would be if some pupil in school or college should, in his commencement oration, defend the average practice of humanity rather than the ideal! No: the boys and girls are all on the side of the angels. We expect to hear from their young lips only the highest sentiments, just as we expect another line of action in the world of business and politics. Yet these intensely earnest and sincere exhorters are to control business and politics in the next generation. At just what point, I wonder, does depreciation begin?

The boys and girls are undoubtedly right. They present the world, not as it is, but as it ought to be. And it is possible that this commencement leaven of idealism more and more permeates the mass—possibly a man of fifty,

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about to do something questionable, suddenly remembers the high words he wrote and spoke thirty years before, and is saved from moral disaster by his own youth. Preaching should never become obsolete, for if it does little good to the audience it certainly helps the speaker, and even the preacher's soul is worth saving. Since the sentiments of youth are right, and the behaviour of most men and women wrong, it would seem doubly unwise to supplant a liberal education by a vocational one. Yet there are many who insist that the universities ought to fit their pupils more directly for a business career—that they ought indeed to adopt business methods. We really need not less but more idealism—instead of trimming the ideal to suit human convenience, we ought to elevate conduct to conform somewhat more closely to the model. I suppose it is by some such process of reflexion that Mr. Santayana says that the colleges should not grow more like the world, but that the world should become more like the colleges.

September is the month of mental awakening: the schools and universities reopen, the symphony orchestras are in active rehearsal, the more serious theatres are busy, the churches begin to fill. For my own part, I have never felt any vital connexion between the temperature and my mind. I am just as religious in August as in January; I can listen to Beethoven

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and Wagner with the same eagerness in July as in December. I do not believe that the human intellect hibernates in heat. And it is pleasant to observe that the big cities of America furnish more opportunities for mental stimulation in the summer than was the case formerly. Wisdom is justified of her children. The experiment of giving classical concerts in New York during the hot weather, begun a few years ago, was and continues to be triumphantly successful. Summer schools are increasingly popular.

Just as mountain hotels in Switzerland and in the Adirondacks, which used to be closed in the cold, are now as popular in winter as in summer, so many of us may live to see the time when there shall be as much intellectual life in the cities during "the heated term" as in the days and nights of frost. The human mind should be like a good hotel—open the year round.

For the present, however, there remains an academic, a musical, and a theatrical "season"; and those of us who love good books, good music, and good plays are wondering what the autumn of 1922 will bring forth. Since the year 1914 New York has been the musical capital of the world, and the appetite grows by what it feeds on. Never have there been so many symphony concerts, and never have they been more thickly attended, and with more reason. If Beethoven were on the earth, he would love New York. . . . The Metropolitan Opera Com-

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pany is the first in the world, and the only reason why it is not better is because the best singers to-day are not equal to those of the last decade of the last century. I am no exalter of the past. I know how easy it is to magnify what was at the expense of what is. But I am not more certain of anything than I am of the supreme excellence of the Metropolitan voices of the happy nineties. To hear a tuneful opera like *Faust* sung by Emma Eames, Lassalle, Jean and Edouard de Reszké, to hear the mighty works of Wagner sung gloriously and interpreted with uncanny intelligence by persons who actually satisfied the eye, was to be living in the golden age. We suffered from an excess of riches. It is a pity that Edouard de Reszké and Plançon should have been contemporaries; it is a pity that Emma Eames, Nordica, Calvé, Sembrich, Melba, Ternina should have adorned the operatic stage at the same moment. As a tenor, Jean de Reszké indeed had the field all to himself; as Lohengrin, his appearance, manner, and voice were as perfect as the author's dream. Well, the new season will introduce some new voices, as did the season of 1921-1922. Fortunately we have returned to the practice of presenting operas in the original language of the libretto. Otto Kahn, whose judgment in art is as sound as his judgment in business, is wholly right in this matter. The chief reason why Continental opera-houses do not follow our example is because they cannot afford to.

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Why is it, when America has produced such a stunning array of women singers, her motherhood of singing men is so meagre? A teacher of long experience told me it was owing to our low valuation of art. Singing is not regarded as a man's job. Perhaps.

But if the opera is not so good as it used to be, the theatre (only in New York, alas!) is better. Every American interested in modern drama should buy, not borrow, Burns Mantle's yearly book on the plays of the past season. It is a complete and valuable record, by which it is immediately apparent what plays were produced, by whom acted, by whom written, and by what numbers attended. Not long ago I heard a cultivated gentleman, in an after-dinner speech, bemoan the present condition of the stage. To prove his point, he read a list of the dramatic offerings forty years ago, and compared them with flimsy stuff now on the boards. He mentioned Shakespeare, Edwin Booth, Lawrence Barrett, and others; but he did not mention the original contemporary English plays of that period, for the simple reason (I suppose) that they were not worth mentioning. The play is always more important than the actor; the play's the thing. I had rather any night hear a good play poorly interpreted than tinsel beautifully set forth. Indeed the better one produces trash the worse off we are; it is like trying to make vice respectable. Nor is it ad-

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visable to have the modern theatre depend upon the past, no, not even on Shakespeare. Original plays are the life of the stage. Forty years ago there were a few brilliant stars; but where were the playwrights? To-day we have the thrill of going to a first night of Barrie, Shaw, Galsworthy, Ervine, O'Neill.

During the last three seasons in New York there were so many excellent new plays as to take away the last excuse for spending one's time and money on inanity, vulgarity, or filth, which we have always with us. The asylums cannot possibly hold all the idiots; furthermore, there are an extraordinary number of idiots who are not dangerous, and there is no reason why they should be confined. It is necessary, however, that they should be entertained; and musical comedy seems to have been skilfully arranged to meet their needs.

There has never been a great play written in the Western Hemisphere. I was much interested in an article, *The Significance of Recent American Drama*, contributed to the July *Scribner's* by my friend Arthur Quinn, of the University of Pennsylvania. That an essay showing such familiarity with the contemporary stage should have been written by a college professor is itself significant. It excites no surprise to-day, for courses in modern drama are given in many universities; forty years ago it would have been an audacity. Mr. Quinn's article is like a skilful lawyer's plea; he is an advocate,

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and he argues with force and enthusiasm, presenting a large number of exhibits. The cold fact remains: there has never been a great play written in the Western Hemisphere. I am not thinking of Shakespeare, Goethe, or Molière; we have never produced a play equal to the best work of Barrie, Shaw, or Galsworthy. No American dramatist, however popular, has ever made an impression on the world's thought as Ibsen, Björnson, Hauptmann, and Shaw have impressed it. But that our metropolitan stage is steadily growing in importance, and that universities are eagerly studying contemporary playwrights, and that theatre guilds and little theatres are multiplying, are perhaps necessary prerequisites. The American drama is worth studying, if only for an exploratory operation, to discover what is the matter with it.

Montrose J. Moses, whose services to students are numerous and valuable, has recently edited, in three tall volumes, *Representative Plays by American Dramatists*. These imposing books contain thirty plays which adequately illustrate the history of American dramatic literature from 1765 to 1911. Many of these specimens have never before been printed. Others were inaccessible to the general public and all have been edited with scrupulous care. Portraits and biographies are given of the authors, original title-pages are reproduced; the circumstances accompanying the composition of each play and of its first performance are succinctly

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given. Homage to the publishers for this undertaking! The expense must have been huge, and it will be a long time before they get back the money invested. But the work is permanent, and it is to be hoped that in the course of a century or so the returns will have justified the experiment. It is a fine adventure and a patriotic service.

None except those who have done some honest editing can appreciate the toil represented in this collection. Mr. Moses must have worked night and day for years. He has been obliged to go through hundreds of manuscripts, dusty heaps of old letters, and conduct an extensive correspondence himself.

Here we behold the development of American drama. If we cannot share the fierce enthusiasm of Mr. Quinn for our contemporary plays, our opinion of them will rise if we read those of a hundred years ago. One thing may be said emphatically. The recent war, together with the large number of plays resulting from it, has given to these early pieces collected by Mr. Moses a peculiar value, quite unforeseen by him when he began his task. The comedies and tragedies of the Revolution, the effect of hostile sentiments between British and Americans, the attitude toward the Tories, show how history and human nature repeat themselves.

Does every one know that George L. Aiken prepared the most popular play in the history of America, I mean *Uncle Tom's Cabin*? Has

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every one read the two texts of *Rip Van Winkle*, employed by Boucicault and Jefferson? Mr. Moses gives a comparative text of the dramatisations by Kerr and by Burke, so that we may follow the evolution of this favourite piece. The introduction shows how the conception of Rip developed, how Jefferson came to use it, and what he did with it. It is not always remembered that Jefferson's first night in this rôle, in 1865, took place in London, the New York performance coming a year later. As the drama is printed here, it is incredibly flat and dull, and I suspect the text used by Jefferson is not much better. It was never the story, but Jefferson himself, that lent to it such vogue on the stage. In spite of the fact that he gave so much pleasure to many thousands, I for one regret his unwillingness to take risks and appear in other parts. Jefferson was a character actor of remarkable charm; it would have been better for our theatre had he been willing to make experiments, instead of contenting himself year after year with a sure thing. His services to the American stage do not compare with those rendered by Richard Mansfield, who made many sacrifices in order to present to American audiences the best plays in the world, old and new.

The third volume will naturally be the most interesting to the largest number, as it deals with the writers of our own time. If the playwrights fifty years hence can show as much improvement over the last ten pieces here printed

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as these show over the preceding twenty, no American will then have to apologise for American dramatists.

The all-important thing for the American stage is a resident repertory company in every city. The astonishing growth of the "little theatre" movement is encouraging; and there is no reason why the Theatre Guild of New York should not be imitated, however remotely, in many other places. It used to be said that the independent theatres often produced good plays but, if one wished to see good acting, one must go to the commercial houses. The New York Theatre Guild has changed all that. Every well-informed person now knows that if he desires excellent productions, the Theatre Guild will best satisfy him. Their presentation of *Liliom* was the finest thing in New York; and all we can say of their success with *Heartbreak House* and *Back to Methuselah* is to quote Kipling: "the Thing that Couldn't has occurred."

To change from new plays to new books: all lovers of Dickens and all who do not love him should read Mr. Santayana's essay in his 1922 volume, *Soliloquies in England*. I mean of course that every one should read this essay, for with Dickens there is no *tertium quid*. Every one is either for Dickens or against him; Dickens has never left an indifferent reader. I thought I knew Santayana pretty well; but I was unprepared for his magnificent tribute to the great

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novelist. It is interesting to see one who has so little enthusiasm for life in love with one who loved life with such gusto. I think it is the best discussion of Dickens I have ever read, and I have read many good ones. It is acute, sympathetic, profound; and the style is Santayana at his best; there is in our time no better English prose than that. "I call his the perfection of morals, for two reasons: that he put the distinction between good and evil in the right place, and that he felt this distinction intensely." How unlike Dickens is to many contemporary novelists who apparently do not know the difference between right and wrong! No one should insist that a novelist should share his particular view of religion and ethics, or that the novelist should be didactic; but an inability to distinguish good from evil seems to me as fatal to a novelist's interpretation of life as colour-blindness would be to the work of a painter.

For linkèd sweetness long drawn out, for wit, humour, and charm maintained through hundreds of pages with no slackening, few books of the year are better than Arnold Bennett's *Mr. Prohack*. Is it not possible that this shrewd author, observing that so many modern novels represent marriage as an intolerable boredom—a boredom even greater to readers than it could have been to the characters—and knowing by actual observation that there were some happy and successful marriages, determined to write

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about one, for novelty if for nothing else? At all events, my thanks to Mr. Bennett for this change in the weather. To read *Mr. Prohack* after attempting to read this and that is like feeling a fresh, invigorating breeze at the close of a sultry afternoon.

I see that the English critics are puzzled by the continued popularity of *If Winter Comes*, and are trying perplexedly to account for it. The book has awakened a like response from both British and American readers. I wish some other problems were as easy as this. The failure of such a novel would have been the real enigma. A book with one great character, abounding in humour and tragedy, filled with the spirit of life—why should it not be popular? It will be interesting to see if *This Freedom* attains a similar success. It is written with an even sharper intensity of emotion; it deals with a question discussed to-day in every home; there are single passages which can never be forgotten; but as a whole, will it come up to everybody's expectation? Whatever the result, no one but a genuine artist could have written it, and no artist could have written it unless his lips had been touched with a live coal from the altar.

II

BECAUSE I am enthusiastic about good things, and make no attempt to conceal it, I am frequently accused, much to my amusement, of saluting every new book with indiscriminate praise. There could hardly be a more inaccurate indictment. The majority of recent novels, some of which are seriously recommended by respectable reviewers, are in my own mind fairly divisible into two classes—sawdust and poison. It is bad enough to have to inhale these during the brief time they afflict us; why call public attention to them? I have no wish to advertise rubbish by attacking it.

By this restraint I know that I deprive many readers of real pleasure. For unless you are a family relation of the victim, you heartily enjoy the resounding thwack of the bludgeon—the slapstick in reviews is as popular as the same implement in the motion-pictures. It is downright funny to see somebody else hit, and the harder the blow the funnier it is. But I am not sure that by catering to this instinct one performs any valuable service to the art of criticism, or helps to elevate public taste.

And I dislike controversy because it usually leads nowhither. If a wordy quarrel about religion or politics or literature becomes violent, those who listen are generally more interested in the combative skill of the antagonists than in

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the question discussed—the appeal fundamentally is not to the love of truth, but to the sporting instinct. Being both a lover of sport and a man of peace, I enjoy the violence of strife in games, and the calm of study and contemplation. I do not like to see one usurp the other's place.

Nor is it the best province of criticism to analyse morbidity. Some of our modern novels might better be examined by alienists than by literary critics—some of their readers too. Those who enjoy slime will wallow in it, whether they pretend to be artists or moralists, or profound “students of life.” It may be the element itself or the shock of it that pleases these gentry. At all events, they are welcome to it. You pay a book a compliment when you say that it is worth criticising; and the finest criticism, when based on knowledge, springs from admiration and sympathy. I wish that all those who believe that criticism means fault-finding would read a few pages of Mr. Spingarn's excellent arrangement in English of Goethe's *Literary Essays*. Goethe seemed to think that the truest criticism came out of enthusiasm.

Any reader of a book-review has a right to know whether the book is worth buying and why.

The best target for adverse comment is an author whose reputation is higher than the merit of his work. He may be an admirable citizen, hold political views pleasing to the critic,

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may even be a public benefactor; but if he be commonly called a great writer when he is at his highest only a literary expert, then a candid examination of his productions may be worth while. Standards should be maintained. From this point of view, attacks on Cowley, Pope, Warburton, and Southey were justifiable. Pope was undoubtedly a man of genius and a great satirist; but Joseph Warton was right in pointing out his limitations as an imaginative poet. He made his readers ask themselves what the word poetry meant. Some one ought to examine in similar fashion the works of the present poet laureate of England. Practically all British critics speak of him with awe, as though he were somehow sacrosanct. He is an excellent man, a fine scholar, and an ingenious prosodist; but an inspired poet, whose poetry transports us? Not only is he outside the company of the immortals, he is inferior to Masfield, Hodgson, De La Mare, and Yeats. . . . In the London *Mercury* for July, there is an appreciative article on the late Sir Walter Raleigh, Professor of English Literature at Oxford. In the last paragraph he is called "this very great man." He was unquestionably an admirable critic and a charming personality; but a very great man? If so, two hundred years from now he will be *the* Walter Raleigh. In the Literary Supplement of the London *Times* for 22 June, D. H. Lawrence is described as "greater than Strindberg—greater in imagination, in percep-

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tion, in power of thought, and in sensitiveness." It would seem to be almost as easy to become a great man in England nowadays as it was to be "one of the most remarkable men in America" when Dickens visited us.

It will depend somewhat on the quality of a man's temperament whether he prefers to puncture swollen reputations or to increase the circulation of books that deserve it. Works of genius will eventually find their rightful place; but there are many excellent productions that ought to be more widely known. During the last twenty-five years there have appeared a dozen novels that for some reason had no sale commensurate with their merit. As I am always filling prescriptions for eager book-lovers, I am now going to recommend some of these stories. They may be out of print; I hope not; but if they cannot be obtained at bookshops—the last place many look for any book—it is probable that the public libraries have them, and I suspect they are right now on the shelves and in better condition than they ought to be.

Pierre Vinton: The Adventures of a Superfluous Husband was published in 1914, when everybody was thinking about the war. The author, Edward C. Venable, had recently been graduated from Princeton, and to me was unknown. I read the book with exceeding great joy, and liked it even better the second time. It is an original story, and the conversations therein can

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truly be called brilliant. It is almost as good as W. J. Locke used to be, the wonderful Locke of *The Beloved Vagabond*, *Septimus*, and *Simon*. I wrote the publishers for information; they were so certain of the manuscript that they had spent a considerable sum in preliminary advertising, and were both saddened and perplexed by the small sale. It is not too late to read *Pierre Vinton*.

The death of Herman Knickerbocker Vielé was a loss to American literature. He was a versatile man. An engineer by profession, he was a student of the arts, had lived in France, and seemed to have by nature a fineness of touch that lent distinction to everything he undertook. His novel of New York life, *The Last of the Knickerbockers*, displayed so much wit, humour, and charm, and such a keen eye for detail, that it seems incredible it should not be better known. Equally good is his brief novel of a love adventure in France, called *The Inn of the Silver Moon*. When you meet any one who has read it, the conversation brightens. Another of his tales, *Myra of the Pines*, shows the author's unmistakable talent. I have no hesitation in recommending all three.

Mary Patricia Willcocks is an English woman, living in Devonshire, who learned some things about human nature by teaching school. Her novel, *The Wingless Victory*, which appeared in 1907, impressed me so deeply that I asked the veteran publisher, John Lane, what he thought

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of it. He said it was the best manuscript that had ever been submitted to him. She followed this with a story equally well done, *A Man of Genius*. Both books are packed with cerebration; there are frequent passages, where, no matter how much you wish to turn the page, you are simply forced to stop and think, her reflexions are so full of challenge. She became an ardent feminist, a radical, and a pamphleteer. I have no quarrel with any one who finds it necessary to uphold strong convictions in public, but I think her zeal is not favourable to her art. Her early novels are better than her later ones.

All Americans, and some Englishmen, are familiar with Alfred Ollivant's masterpiece, *Bob, Son of Battle*, the best dog story I ever read. Although written by an Englishman and for Englishmen, it attracted little attention in the land of its birth, while selling by the hundred thousand in America. I have never met an American book-lover who had not read it, but the average Briton looks blank when you mention it, even if you remember to call it by its English title, *Owd Bob*. Mr. Ollivant has written many books since 1898, but the one that comes the nearest to *Bob* is not nearly so well known here as it deserves to be. This is *Boy Woodburn*, the story of a racehorse. Is it possible that John Masefield took a hint from this for *Right Royal*? He follows Mr. Ollivant in printing a map of the course. Alfred Ollivant is certainly more in-

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terested in men and women than in animals, and, unlike some novelists, knows the distinction; but his best two books are canine and equine

Many novels have been written in our country to illustrate the process of Americanization, but the best one I have seen is *Our Natupski Neighbors*, by Edith Miniter, published in 1916. This is the real thing, and came from direct observation. Mrs. Miniter is a New England journalist, and for a time was the only woman city editor of a daily paper in New England. The history of this Polish family ought to be read by every American. When I say that I regard it as superior even to *My Antonia*, you will see how much I admire it.

The thousands who share my pleasure in *Shavings* ought to read *Fondie*, by Edward C. Booth. I know nothing about Mr. Booth, except that he is a British novelist; I have seldom met any one who ever heard of him. One difference between *Shavings* and *Fondie* is the difference between comedy and tragedy. The Cape Cod story is amusing, entertaining, charming; the other is so painful that perhaps only a minority can enjoy its extraordinary beauty. The hero in both is very much the same kind of man—aggressively harmless. The British story is written with such dignity, such restraint, such purity of style, and such uncompromising devotion to art that it should not be allowed to pass into the limbo of forgotten books.

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Greylake of Mallerby is another English novel that has apparently made no impression whatever on any one except me and those whom I have persuaded to read it. The author is W. L. Cribb, who lives in Louth, in Lincolnshire, and I can discover nothing else that he has written. This is the tale of a town by the sea, where every person is so sharply delineated that when you come to the last page you feel that you have been living for years in the village and know the people intimately. A vein of irony that never reaches burlesque illuminates the whole book, and gives an agreeable tang to the style. Those who read only "snappy" stories will not care for this one.

Harold Begbie, who likes to publish anonymously, produced a novel in 1914 called in England *Tributaries*, and in America *The House of Deceit*. It is a story of degeneration. I wrote to the publishers for information about the author, and was informed that he preferred to withhold his name. He did not reveal it until August 1917, when apparently every one had forgotten the existence of the book. It is, however, as well worth reading as his subsequent anonymous publications, which have had a sensational success.

I can see why some of the above-mentioned novels failed to score; but I am puzzled by the continued neglect of *The Fugitive Blacksmith*, by Charles D. Stewart. The publishers were so enthusiastic over this manuscript that they

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issued in 1905 a preliminary edition, in special binding, which was sent out to a few critics. It is my belief that all who read it shared the opinion of the publishers, a most unusual state of affairs; but unfortunately it never had a wide sale, and one hears it only occasionally mentioned. Mr. Stewart was born in Ohio, and has spent most of his life in Wisconsin. He is a creative artist and an independent scholar. His little book, *Some Textual Difficulties in Shakespeare*, threw light on many dark passages, and he has the honour of being the first to explain lines that had eluded the diligence, scholarship, and insight of professional investigators for three hundred years. It is precisely the kind of book that one would never have expected from our novelist. I am certain of the excellence of *The Fugitive Blacksmith*. It is an original novel of American life, filled with adventure, humour, and poignant tragedy. I shall remember the man under the cow so long as I live. Two years later Mr. Stewart published *Partners of Providence*, a story of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers, which is fully as good as *The Fugitive Blacksmith*, so good indeed as to make its author the only legitimate successor to Mark Twain. It is a book successful every way except commercially.

I should like especially to recommend three Russian novels by Serge Aksakoff. Although they were written about seventy-five years ago, they did not appear in a complete translation

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until 1917. They are autobiographical, and give vivid pictures of farm, school, and college life at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. The first, *A Russian Gentleman*, is unique in autobiography, since it ends with the day of the author's birth; as a matter of fact, it is chiefly about his grandfather, and he obtained most of the facts from his mother's lips. It is a magnificent portrait of a *Man*, and the country customs are described with extraordinary charm. The second, *Years of Childhood*, was written when the author had become almost totally blind, and was confined to his room with an incurable and painful illness, which he never mentions, and which his calm style never betrays. The third, *A Russian Schoolboy*, written before the second, but dealing with a later period, gives the history of his life at school and at the University of Kazan. The accomplished translator, J. D. Duff, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, gives some interesting details of the author in his three prefaces, quoting from a letter written by Aksakoff in 1856, after the first part of this narrative had appeared: "The success of my life has surprised me. You know that my vanity was never excessive, and it remains what it was, in spite of all the praise, sometimes extravagant to folly, which has reached me in print or in letters or by word of mouth. . . . To the end of a long life I have preserved warmth and liveliness of imagination; and that is why talents that are

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not extraordinary have produced an extraordinary effect." The case of Aksakoff is somewhat similar to that of De Morgan; he had scarcely any reputation until he published this family history at the age of sixty-five, and immediately became famous. I suppose one reason why these three books, classics in Russia, have never before been translated is because they are free from abnormality and sensationalism. But they are just as captivating as Jane Austen; and I wish this passing tribute might send its readers to the books themselves.

This year a miracle happened in Great Britain. Barrie made a speech, and before its echoes had died, he made another, lest you should think he never could recapture the first rapture; which was fine, but not careless. Barrie is the genius of the unexpected; but no sentence from his pen ever surprised me so much as the news of his appearance on the platform. Public speaking, Bernard Shaw's favourite recreation, has been so abhorrent to Barrie's temperament that I should have been willing to guess anything rather than the rôle of orator. Wild horses could not have dragged him to the rostrum, for wild horses cannot drag anything. (The proverb is poor; it is only after they have been broken and tamed that horses drag efficiently.) It was college loyalty that induced Barrie to make what must have been for him the supreme sacrifice. On May 3 he delivered the rectorial ad-

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dress at St. Andrews University, on the theme *Courage*; his speech, as reported all over the world in the newspapers, made such an impression that the publishers have now wisely issued it in the permanent form of a tiny book. We all love to preach, we all love to give advice; I have never known a single exception to the rule. Even our rebels of to-day believe in preaching, so long as you do not preach morality. Perhaps no preachers are so dogmatically humourless as they. Barrie gave a baccalaureate sermon to young men, founded on the deep wisdom of human experience. He eschewed paradoxes, and confined himself to the things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report; for if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, we must think on these things. His citation from the letter of Captain Scott in the Antarctic thrilled his audience; it is impossible to read it without realising the sublime courage of the man. Scott and his companions were awaiting death, as slow and painful as it was certain; he wrote: "It would do your heart good to be in our tent, to hear our songs and our cheery conversation. . . . We did intend to finish ourselves when things proved like this, but we have decided to die naturally without." The quality of reverence innate in every one of Barrie's books appears explicitly in this sentence from the address: after quoting Henley's

"My head is bloody but unbowed,"

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he says, "a fine mouthful, but perhaps 'My head is bloody and bowed' is better." Barrie himself has illustrated the quality of courage. He went to London, penniless and unknown. and conquered the city.

We knew that his words on this occasion would survive; but those closest to him must have wondered if he would survive the occasion. After feeling of himself all over, and discovering to his amazement that he was perfectly sound, he exemplified anew the courage he had recommended, and this time made not only a speech, but an after-dinner speech. Now I am entirely of the opinion expressed by Heywood Broun in his delightful *Pieces of Hate* concerning the general run of after-dinner oratory. I regret that this institution survived the war. It will, I am afraid, survive everything except the treatment recommended by Mr. Broun. It has survived the second act of *To the Ladies!* and, having survived that burlesque, is assuredly ridicule-proof. Most speakers hate it, most audiences hate it; it has no real friends, and yet it goes on its devastating course. I remember having to speak at a public dinner in Chicago; I found my place at that pillory of torment, the speakers' table, and there, seeing a magnificent man in evening dress, I gave him my name and grasped his hand with what cordiality I could command. He replied: "I'm the head waiter, sir." "Shake hands again, old man," I cried; "you don't know how I envy you!"

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In after-dinner speaking we put the cart before the horse, or rather before the horse's humble cousin. Instead of having a long, stupefying dinner, followed by long, stupefying speeches, how much better it would be, if we really wished to hear the senator, or the ambassador, or the captain of industry, if we could meet and hear him and, at the conclusion of the oratory, sit down together and enjoy a good dinner! Then during the language, we should all be looking forward to something agreeable, which is the essence of happiness. Furthermore, the speaker would not dare to talk indefinitely. I remember being obliged on one occasion to preside at a "business men's banquet"; there were five speakers; the third spoke two hours and thirty minutes. I was sorry for the fourth and fifth, but still more sorry for myself, for my post of honour made escape impossible.

Since we have horseless carriages, and smokeless powder, and fireless ovens, and wireless telegraphy, and are exhorted to eatless meat, why may we not have speechless dinners? Friends do not have to talk. Intimacy annihilates formality. Carlyle and Tennyson once spent three hours together, and neither opened his mouth except to expel the friendly tobacco smoke. At the conclusion of the evening, one said, "This has been a most delightful time," and the other replied, "I never enjoyed your company so much."

Well, if we must have after-dinner speeches,

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I wish they could all be as good as Barrie's. It is oratory, not conversation, that is offensive. There are those whose table-talk sounds like a stump speech; and there are those whose stump speeches sound like intimate conversation. I know which I prefer. Barrie's after-dinner speech was intimate, confidential, confessional; it sounds as if it must have had that best of all accompaniments, an open fire and a brier pipe. He had announced at St. Andrews that he was then making his first and last appearance; but in speaking, it is the first fifty minutes that are the hardest. How easy it is to sin after one has once fallen! In the very same month of May he was, very much like a martyr at the stake, the "guest of honour" at a dinner in the Savoy, given by the dramatic critics; the simile holds admirably, for many among those present had roasted him. His humour and honesty disarmed his adversaries. The speech has been printed in the newspapers, and I hope it will be preserved in another booklet. I counsel those who do not like Barrie—and many there be who are offended in him—to read his talk to the critics. He gave his reasons for never having replied to hostile criticism—the best of all rules for writers of books. For the most effective reply should be found in the next book.

Barrie's talk abounds in Shandisms, in the humour that cannot be imitated, for it is a part of his personality. He is tired of being called whimsical, and said so; nor does he enjoy the

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adjective fantastic. In speaking of the chairman's introduction, he said: "I felt he could not be so shabby as to say whimsical, and that he might forget to say elusive. If you knew how dejected those terms have often made me!" Then they must have laughed, for he went on: "I am quite serious. I never believed I was any of those things until you dinned them into me. Few have tried harder to be simple and direct. I have also always thought that I was rather realistic." This illustrates the impossibility that even a writer of genius finds in producing exactly the impression on the public that was in his own mind. With what strange feelings he must read even favourable reviews, and how wide of the mark the best critics must seem to him!

And yet in this speech he displays the qualities that have given his works their unique position. "You may sometimes wonder why I write so much about islands, and indeed I have noticed a certain restiveness in some of you on the subject. There are more islands in my plays than any of you are aware of. I have the cunning to call them by other names. There is one thing I am really good at, and that is at slipping in an island."

He gave himself a new name. "None of your adjectives gets to the mark as much as one I have found for myself—'Inoffensive Barrie.' I see how much it at once strikes you all. A bitter pill; but it looks as if on one subject I

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were the best critic in the room." Well, no one would think of applying the word to Shaw.

Finally, as showing what bewildering statements creative artists will make when they indulge themselves in literary criticism, Barrie declared that the best play written in his time was—and how sharp must have been the general attention—Pinero's *Iris*. I do not know which of two men shouted the loudest hallelujah when they read that statement; Sir Arthur Pinero or Clayton Hamilton. Barrie's remark must have driven hundreds to rereading *Iris*. I advise all to read the play in Mr. Hamilton's valuable edition of *The Social Plays of Pinero*, where the text and its history are accompanied with sympathetic comment. I wish our leading modern dramatists might be similarly presented to the public.

Iris is undoubtedly a stirring play. In Springfield, Massachusetts, a serious attempt was made to suppress its performance, which seems odd just now. Every well-informed American who rereads it must observe certain striking resemblances—perhaps accidental—between that drama and Eugene Walter's *The Easiest Way*. The divergences are as interesting as the similarities, and in a way indicate the difference between the British and the American manner.

When will Barrie resume the publication of his plays? Seven volumes have appeared,

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which I advise every one to buy. They were coming along regularly at decent intervals when, about two years ago, the pause became a silence. He caught writer's cramp, or something, and had to learn to write with his left hand. Even his handwriting is paradoxical, for his right-hand penmanship was so illegible as to be positively sinister, whereas now his sinister penmanship is truly dexterous. We must have his complete plays in print. They belong to literature; and stage-plays are the twentieth century's most notable contribution to English letters. His directions are as good as the dialogue. I am hungry to read *The Legend of Leonora*, to see if it will confirm my theory, and *Dear Brutus* for the same reason; and I must have in my hands and before my eyes that masterpiece *Mary Rose*, to discover more accurately the spiritual geography of the island.

III

I HAVE often been asked this question: What is the most exciting novel you have ever read? The answer is not difficult. I have been thrilled by *The Three Musketeers*, *Treasure Island*, *The Adventures of Captain Horn*; but the most exciting novel I have ever read is *The Wings of the Morning*, by Louis Tracy. It opens with a shipwreck, and from the first word in the first chapter to the last word on the book's last page, it never lags or sags. I will guarantee this story to all convalescents; and as an anæsthetic for railway travel, it is effective.

Typographical errors are becoming alarmingly common in contemporary English and American books; where are the proof-readers? Nearly every new book I pick up, no matter how exalted the name at the foot of the title-page, bristles with blunders. Sometimes these are unconscious but distinct contributions to humour. I suppose the last place one would look for a joke would be in the works of Herbert Spencer; yet in his *Autobiography* there is an account of one of the happiest errors imaginable. Inasmuch as the *Autobiography* fell flat, and is little read, I venture to repeat this. Spencer said there was a devout woman who wrote the following sentence: *Pour bien comprendre l'amour, il faut sortir de soi*. To her horror, the sentence appeared in the book, *Pour bien comprendre*

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l'amour, il faut sortir le soir. She must have dictated; it is difficult for any one not of the Middle West, to give the full and correct value to the French R. Mr. William Henry Bishop, the American novelist, who is an excellent French scholar, told me that once in a restaurant in Belgium, he ordered a lobster. When the waiter brought it, it was so small that Mr. Bishop regarded it contemptuously and said, as he supposed, *C'est pour rire!* To his amazement, the waiter instantly smelt of it, and said, *Vous avez raison, Monsieur; c'est pourri.* He carried it away with imperturbable gravity, and brought him another.

Apart from typographical errors, modern books contain many misspellings. The word most often misspelled by the best authors and publishers, is *ecstasy*; and the name that suffers most often is Shakespeare's *Jacques*. There is no authority for writing *ecstasy*; and to write *Jacques* is not only to give the wrong name, but to attack Shakespeare's rhythm. Yet in a work by that arch-corrector of other men, the late J. Churton Collins, I found *Jacques*; and in his book on Hamlet, published in 1922 by Professor Clutton-Brock of Oxford, I note the same ghastly blunder. There are two quite different men in *As You Like It* named *Jacques*, but there is no *Jacques*.

Professor Clutton-Brock's little book stirred up much dust in England, and while it is full of thought-provoking statements, and therefore

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valuable, it gets us really no nearer to the Prince of Denmark. You cannot capture the secret of his personality by psycho-analysis any more than you can expose a man's soul by an autopsy. Outside of the Bible, Hamlet is the most interesting character in the world; you can arouse more heated controversy about him than by discussing Woodrow Wilson or Theodore Roosevelt. Why should every one try to make him consistent, or to fit him to a formula? His essential humanity is shown in the fact that he was not consistent, not a personified type or abstraction. He is a college undergraduate of splendid mind, noble character, and irresistible charm; his self-reproaches are natural enough, for it is always good young men, like Milton, Emerson, and Jonathan Edwards, who are dissatisfied with their conduct and achievement; the selfish and lazy, although they waste much time, never waste it in remorse; they rather fancy themselves. As if to forestall adverse criticism, Shakespeare placed alongside Hamlet another young man, Laertes, conventional and shallow; when his father is killed, he does exactly what many have insisted Hamlet ought to have done, and with disastrous results. No living character will ever act logically; he will act only chronologically. And when he is as interesting as Hamlet, it is fascinating to see what he will do next. All we know is that it will be something unpredictable.

There is one passage which no commentator and no actor has ever interpreted to my satis-

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faction. In the midst of his soliloquy on the possibilities of future existence—sleep or dreams—Hamlet sees Ophelia approaching, and he says, first to himself, and then to her:

Soft you now!
The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons
Be all my sins remember'd.

Nearly all seem to think this should be spoken lightly, as a half-mocking formal compliment, with a touch of banter; for many men change the conversation from serious matters to nonsense when a woman enters the room, as though intellectual subjects were as much beyond her range as if she were the house-cat. Pretty creature! But consider a moment: what has Hamlet been thinking about? He has been obsessed by the dreadful thought of suicide, a thought a million times commoner than the act, but nevertheless dangerous. He knows his soul is in peril. Remember what Burton said in the *Anatomy of Melancholy* on this insidious idea: "Who knows how he may be tempted? It is his case, it may be thine: . . . God be merciful unto us all." In the midst of this horror of great darkness, Ophelia appears, and Hamlet says with an intensity of feeling strange to her ignorance of his peril:

in thy orisons
Be all my sins remember'd.

"Oh, Ophelia, pray for me." Every young man needs the prayers of a good girl. There are times when he needs them desperately.

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Hamlet is not treating Ophelia either with smiling or with tender condescension; he is in a mental attitude of supplication.

It should be remembered that even Horatio, the man of iron composure and self-control, tried to commit suicide.

It is pleasant to observe that the new Vailima Stevenson, with family prefaces, the most complete that has ever appeared, surpassing in this and in some other respects the much-sought-after Edinburgh edition, was entirely sold by subscription before a single volume was printed, so that the set has already mounted to fancy prices. I say it is pleasant to observe this, not only because the Vailima edition is so beautiful as to be worthy of the beautiful art of the author, but because such an immediate response is sufficient answer to the present detractors of Stevenson, of whom there are enough to draw attention, not to Stevenson, but to themselves, which perhaps is their main purpose. To say that Stevenson was not a great writer is like saying that the sun is not shining, when it is. They who listen do not think of the sun; they regard with curiosity those who deny its light.

The same publishers whose monument to Stevenson is so admired are building another to John Galsworthy, who perhaps, among English novelists in activity, is most deserving of the memorial. Inasmuch as the Stevenson is a genuine limited edition, printed from type and the type distributed, which is the only satisfac-

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tory method, so, in the case of an author yet alive there should be some guarantee that his future works will be included. This undertaking has, I believe, been promised to those who buy the Galsworthy set.

I hope that the handsome New York edition of the works of Henry James will be completed. He is prevented by unavoidable absence from writing new prefaces, which added so much to the volumes he supervised; the same reason makes it impossible for him to revise the other books, and for this fact I am grateful. His alterations are not improvements. Simply compare the paragraph containing the death of Daisy Miller as he originally published it with the later version. As there is in England at this moment a complete set of his works in process of publication, there should be one also in the land of his birth, where, by his own request, his ashes rest. There could not be a better way to accomplish this than by continuing the New York edition.

I wonder how many agree with me that *The American* is Henry James's best novel, and that *The Turn of the Screw* is the best ghost story ever written? Probably not many; which does not shake my faith, though I wish there were more.

Mr. Thomas Sergeant Perry, one of the real scholars in America, writes to me, "While everything else is going to smash, what tennis pre-

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vails!" Is not this the true reason why so many of the intelligentsia, on opening the morning paper, turn first of all to the sporting page? I remember once, during the war, while travelling on a train, a newsboy brought in the papers, which were eagerly bought. Sitting near me was a clergyman in clerical dress, who opened his paper feverishly, and turned instantly to the sporting page, without looking to see what had happened in France. Perhaps this habit, which is more common than some may think, needs no apology. The front page is covered with failures—failures of capitalists and labourers to avert disastrous strikes, failures of statesmen to bring peace to the world, failures in Ireland, failures of stock brokers, failures of theatre-managers, failures of husbands and wives in the art of living together. All of these groups of people should be experts, and their pathetic failures are daily and depressingly recorded. How different is the sporting page, where we read of the glorious triumphs of Ty Cobb, Sarazen, Sweetser, Tilden, and Johnston! The sporting page is the Daily Hope. It advertises success rather than failure.

My friend Perry also makes a *mot* which should not be lost. Seeing a Harvard undergraduate with a huge H on his sweater, he remarked, "Yes, I see now what is meant by the way universities nourish the love of letters."

Many good Americans seem to be troubled

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about the vast number of English authors who come hither to lecture, are eagerly and copiously entertained, and then return to their native land with much money, for which in some cases they have given nothing except their digestion. The thing certainly has its amusing side, especially when the "lecturer" knows nothing of the art of speaking, looks at a crowded and expensive audience quizzically, begins his remarks by stating that he has nothing to say, and then proves it to the satisfaction of all. But why take offence? Attendance is voluntary. Some say acidly, that if *we* sent *our* authors over *there*, *they* would not receive either money or hospitality. Perhaps not; yet Mark Twain found it easy to obtain both. Just now, we have no Mark Twain; and while reading Franklin the other day, I hit upon the possible reason why Americans entertain foreigners so lavishly. In a note appended to his *Remarks concerning the Savages of North America*, Franklin said: "It is remarkable that in all Ages and Countries Hospitality has been allow'd as the Virtue of those whom the civiliz'd were pleased to call Barbarians. The Greeks celebrated the Scythians for it. The Saracens possess'd it eminently, and it is to this day the reigning Virtue of the wild Arabs. St. Paul, too, in the Relation of his Voyage and Shipwreck on the Island of Melita says the Barbarous People shewed us no little kindness; for they kindled a fire, and received us every one."

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Why do old people eat so much? Many families have some aged and worn-out member, who has to be supported, and who seems to the supporters both a particular and a prodigious consumer of food. Old Isaac was swindled by that unscrupulous mother-and-son combination Rebekah and Jacob—swindled through his lust for meat. The reason why the aged and the idle eat so much is simple enough. It is because meals are the chief events in the day. To an active man or woman good food is agreeable, but the eater is not primarily interested in it; he has been busy up to meal-time, and is thinking of what he has to do the moment the repast is over. Sometimes indeed, no matter how excellent the luncheon, it is an interruption in an absorbing occupation, which is why most Americans could not endure afternoon tea. Do you think I would stop my work or my golf for that? But to venerable and idle persons, who have nothing to do except look forward to the next meal, this is a sacred rite, not to be taken carelessly or hastily. Observe how particular every one (except the seasick) is about food on an ocean liner, or while travelling anywhere. Some unsympathetic critics say that those who complain about their meals on shipboard probably have not very good ones at home. Of course; that is precisely why they complain when meals are all-important. It is not so surprising that tourists often remember a certain place in Europe because there they had a marvellous

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dinner. This is quite natural, otherwise it would not be such a common experience. And there is point to what Oscar Wilde said: "I hate people who are not serious about their meals."

A French gentleman, of whom I had never heard, recently went to London to see the English plays, and was so disgusted with them that he relieved his mind in *Figaro*. He saw Barrie's *Dear Brutus*, and declared, "It is a charming play for a child of six to write." I remember reading somewhere how the attention of a group of squabbling men was called to a little child, with the remark that, unless they could become as little children, they could not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Does not the inability of this Parisian to understand Barrie unconsciously help to explain the present condition of French drama?

In the last act of *What Every Woman Knows*, when Maggie is trying to force John into imprisonment with Sybil, John says, "You needn't be in such a hurry. There are three days to run yet." Barrie adds in parentheses, "The French are so different from us that we shall probably never be able to understand why the Comtesse laughed aloud here." I am afraid he understands them better than *vice versa*.

At the age of eighty-two, Thomas Hardy has published a new volume of poems, called *Late Lyrics and Earlier*. It is fine to see such re-

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splendent vitality in one who, as Carlyle said of Goethe at the same age, is "beaming in mildest mellow splendour, beaming, if also trembling, like a great sun on the verge of the horizon, near now to its long farewell." These lyrics show no diminution of beauty, for most of his poems are of the afternoon. And his gospel of despair reveals the same ingenuity of torment, as in *After the War*, where the lovers parted in 1914 with a premonition on her part that this would be the last embrace. So it was; only he returned alive, to find her dead. The introductory prose Apology is, however, rather curious. He says: "And what is to-day, in allusions to the present author's pages, alleged to be 'pessimism' is, in truth, only such 'questionings' in the exploration of reality, and is the first step towards the soul's betterment, and the body's also." I find this preface doubly strange; first, that Mr. Hardy should feel persecuted when his is the most universally honoured name by old and young, and by all schools of thought, in the Anglo-Saxon world. He has reached an apotheosis, and, so far as his literary art is concerned, he deserves it. What more could a man possibly ask of his contemporaries than Thomas Hardy has received? What more could even an optimist ask of life than eighty-two years of sound bodily and mental vigour, with the free exercise of his creative genius, amid the encouragement of the whole age?

In the second place, I cannot see why he should

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resent being called a pessimist. That is no term of reproach; it is a description of a respectable intellectual attitude. I think none the worse of a man because he is a sincere, honest, and convinced pessimist, and Mr. Hardy is just that. It never offends me to be called a Christian nor even a Puritan; and it is certainly more fashionable to be a pessimist than a Puritan.

It is interesting to see Mr. Hardy dismissing the Catholic Church because it remains staunch in its faith; it has lost its chance for the future, he thinks. This statement will make good Catholics smile. Members of all branches of the Christian Church will not commit the folly of following the advice of those who never under any circumstances would join it. Yet to-day, as in past time, Christian people are daily in receipt of advice from enemies of their faith, which they may be pardoned for treating, even when it is well meant, with the consideration it deserves.

The fact is that Thomas Hardy, like so many others, cannot delete the Christian religion from his mind. And one reason is, that in charity, gentleness, good-will, and kindness to both men and animals, he is in his heart filled with what the apostle of Christianity called the greatest thing in the world. The last poem in this volume, *Survivour*, bearing the motto, *Cogitavi vias meas*, represents the old poet looking into the fire, and hearing therefrom his own voice talk-

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ing to him, and telling him that he had not taught that which he had set about, that the greatest of things is Charity. Well, if he has not taught it, he has done something better; he has expressed it in his daily life.

The year 1922 has not been so good a year for novels as 1920 and 1921. Although the first half of the book is the author's best, as a whole *This Freedom* is inferior to *If Winter Comes*; Booth Tarkington must know as well as anybody that *Gentle Julia* is not to be compared with *Alice Adams*; Edith Wharton's *The Glimpses of the Moon* looks almost cheap when placed by *The Age of Innocence*; Mrs. Burnett's *Robin* is a disappointing sequel to *The Head of the House of Coombe*; Wells's *The Secret Places of the Heart* is negligible; Marshall's *Big Peter* will not please the lovers of the Clinton family.

The best American novel of the year is *Adrienne Toner*, by Anne Douglas Sedgwick.

I am glad to see that at last England is waking up to the fact that she has an important novelist in Archibald Marshall, whose works have been widely appreciated in America for the last seven years. In the August *Mercury* there is an interesting essay on his stories, with an enquiry as to the reason for America's more cordial recognition of them. A full-page portrait in the same number will interest those who met Mr. Marshall in America in 1921.

Why is it that, when Italy is flooded with

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Americans, so few of them go to Fano? Robert and Elizabeth Browning visited the little walled town in 1848, and, finding in the church of S. Agostino a portrait of *The Guardian Angel* by Guercino, Browning wrote a poem which made this picture one of the most famous in the world. Yet no one ever goes there. In 1912, when I stood in front of the original, I found a resident Hungarian priest who had never seen an American before. Nor did he know that Guercino's masterpiece had been translated into English song. I wrote a half-page biography of Browning for his instruction in such Italian that, if Dante could see it, I should find myself moving in a very exclusive circle. In the year 1912 I had never met any person who had been in Fano. People who knew everything else in Italy had never entered the gates of Fano. I therefore organised "The Fano Club." There are no initiation fees and no dues; the sole conditions for active and eternal membership are that the candidate shall go to Fano, write on a picture post-card, and send it to me bearing the Fano post-mark. The first to join was the distinguished American botanist, A. W. Evans; in the summer of 1922 my brilliant colleague C. B. Tinker and the Rev. Father McCune qualified; also Emily Whitney, daughter of America's foremost philologist. At present there are perhaps ten members. Who will be the eleventh? No town in Italy is easier to visit, whether you take the train down the east coast from

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Venice or across country from Foligno to Ancona, which latter town is highly interesting. There Browning not only wrote *The Guardian Angel*, but also *A Grammarian's Funeral*, as I learned by the source known in the *Dictionary of National Biography* as "private information."

In addition to founding the Fano Club, I have established what I call the Ignoble Prize; for which any one is at liberty to suggest the names of candidates. In order to be eligible for the Ignoble Prize, the thing—whether book or musical composition or building or painting—must have a high reputation, be commonly regarded as a masterpiece, and yet to the individual who submits it be lacking both in interest and appeal. Not for a moment would the works of a popular author with no true fame be accepted; the prime condition is that the object suggested must be both famous and respectable, so that the person suggesting it is in danger of damnation, which gives the game a particular little thrill of its own. Having more audacity than fear, I suggest the plain tower of Chartres Cathedral, Raphael's *Transfiguration*, Meyerbeer's *Huguenots*, Thackeray's *Newcomes*, and Dickens's *Little Dorrit* and *A Tale of Two Cities*. I admit that such a list is enough to take one's breath away; but for some reason, not one of these masterpieces has ever impressed me as the critics say it should. Does any one else dare speak his mind? The interior of

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Chartres is to me the most sublime interior in the world. But I have looked at that plain tower from every angle, trying conscientiously to see why the critics fall down and worship it. To me it is just a church steeple, matched a hundred times in Ohio or Indiana.

Are we going to have a censorship of printed books? Is it necessary to regulate all our mental food as it has been found necessary to supervise physical food? Even the most ardent advocates of license in writing would not, I suppose, disapprove of the Pure Food Law—in other words, no one has a right to manufacture and sell any food he pleases. For it is unfortunately true that there are plenty of men who would sell poison if they could make a legal profit by doing so. Their zeal has to be regulated. And although authors and publishers are as a rule respectable persons, there are plenty of both who would be willing to sell corruption to adolescents if they were not prevented by law. Is the soul less important than the body, or is freedom to injure the mind more precious than freedom to injure the health? The question is not so simple as all that. I do not agree with those who say immoral books hurt no one; I think they hurt every one who reads them, provided the reader is a normal human being with any imagination. The difficulty is to find the right censor, probably an impossible task. And until he can be found,

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the criminal law which we already have is perhaps the best method to deal with unsuitable publications. Liberty is the soul of art; we want no cure that is worse than the disease.

Yet it should be remembered that if the censorship should be established, and we pass under arbitrary and irresponsible tyranny, it will not be the fault of the prudes and the reformers and the bigots. It will be the fault of those who destroy freedom by their selfish excesses. I should like to state in four words what I believe to be a natural law: *Excess leads to prohibition*. It is not the fault of the Bolsheviks that Russia at present is such a hell; it is the excess of Tsarism lasting two hundred years and becoming intolerable. Had even the late Tsar ruled wisely and moderately, he might have died in his bed. The French Revolution was not the work of madmen; it was caused chiefly by Louis XIV, Louis XV, and their counsellors. In turn, the excesses of the revolutionists led to their abolition, as will probably be the case in Russia. Napoleon was not beaten by Wellington; no one but himself could ever have beaten Napoleon, and he did the job thoroughly. England and France are not the cause of Germany's downfall; she fell through the excess of her own pride and ambition. What is true of big matters is also true of little things. A man who smokes all the time eventually discovers that he cannot smoke at all. "The doctor told me I had to cut it out." Life is a dan-

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gerous game to play, and moderation is a rare virtue.

The absolute prohibition of beer and wine in America, which is theoretically an absurdity, came to pass not through the cranks and the teetotallers, but because so many people drank like professionals instead of like amateurs. So if a Dark Age of literary intolerance should come upon us, do not blame the bigots and the narrow-minded; put the blame where it should justly fall, on those who wrote so abominably that in order to silence them the army of wise and high-minded authors had to wear fetters.

IV

THE younger generation, like every younger generation since the Garden of Eden, is filled with the spirit of revolt; a very good thing, too, for it keeps the older generation awake. I do not know how many people are afraid of the younger generation, but I know I am not; for forty years I have lived with them, and there is nothing about them terrifying. Their eagerness rather calls for affection and sympathy. Ibsen speaks of the younger generation knocking at the door, which shows how old-fashioned he was; for they enter without knocking, and if the door is locked, they burst it open. A child accepts its parents and its environment with the pathetic unquestioning faith of a dog; I dare say a child brought up on a lonely farm in Montana is as happy as a child in New York—I don't know, because I had neither experience. Then when the boy or girl begins to struggle out of the slough of despond called adolescence, he or she sees many things that ought to be quite different, and proceeds to shout revolution in religion, politics, and art. These doctrines are often modified in later years, not by age—for age should bring more rather than less enthusiasm—but by responsibilities. A foot-loose, irresponsible young gentleman has a rather different attitude towards life and institutions from that held by one who owns a house,

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pays taxes, is the father of a family, and engaged in a bread-winning occupation.

Although I have many sins on my back, I am innocent of one great transgression. I have never laughed at the younger generation, though I have sometimes found it impossible to restrain merriment in reflecting over things they have said. But I have never greeted the passionate opinions of youth with ridicule, or with a condescending grin. Most people, both young and old, are more afraid of being laughed at than of anything else; and though it is a sin against the Holy Ghost to laugh at the ambitious dreams of young men and maidens, it is well that they should remember that no one can make an intellectual advance until he overcomes the fear of ridicule. I mean he must not only be unabashed by ridicule from others, he must triumph over his own ridicule of himself. For while the sense of humour is a healthful check on egotism, and enables one to derive vast secret enjoyment out of watching the human comedy, it may destroy the soul. Every person engaged with all his heart in any occupation looks slightly ridiculous to an immaculate spectator; if he begins to look so to himself he is lost.

My meditations on this subject have been stirred by the fact that three prominent members of the younger generation—every one an important spokesman—have, without any collusion, made a simultaneous revolt against the

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sense of humour. All persons suffering from an attack of maturity who cannot understand why the younger generation are so white-hot with rage should read the Preface to Robert Nichols's drama, *Guilty Souls*. Mr. Nichols is a strictly typical case, though his talent for expression is exceptional. He is an Oxford man who took a post-graduate course in the war, and is still under thirty. In this Preface he cleanses his bosom of much perilous stuff, and I am truly sorry for any old man who cannot read it with sympathy. He hits out in every direction with all his might, and there are two things he hits hardest of all—Good Taste and the Sense of Humour. He is not afraid of making an ass of himself, for he has come to see that that fear means intellectual and moral suicide.

“For on one thing I am set: I will be what I am and say what I wish to say whether the result be popularity, derision, or indifference, though the foggy, Good Taste, and the bogy, a Sense of Humour, would say me nay. For I am profoundly of the opinion that there are those of us who have had enough, and a good deal more than enough, of that infernal pair. . . . There is not in my play a single character with a sense of humour or good taste. And I am glad of it. The Prince of Darkness knows how many souls—more especially in England—are lost through Good Taste. . . . Slay Humour ere Humour slays you. In the name of what do you submit to such tyranny?”

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This strong English voice is an unconscious echo of that voice of Gascony that restored the heroic drama to France twenty-five years ago: when Rostand was admitted to the French Academy he made a similar onslaught against the humour of mockery, and we know who the villain is in *Chantecler*.

At the same moment which saw the appearance of Robert Nichols's declaration of war on humour, Compton Mackenzie, in his remarkable novel, *The Altar Steps*, made his young hero write to the rector as follows: "One hears of the saving grace of humour, but I'm not sure that humour is a saving grace. I rather wish that I had no sense of humour. It's a destructive quality. All the great sceptics have been humourists. Humour is really a device to secure human comfort. Take me. I am inspired to become a preaching friar. I instantly perceive the funny side of setting out to be a preaching friar. I tell myself that other people will perceive the funny side of it, and that consequently I shall do no good as a preaching friar. Yes, humour is a moisture which rusts everything except gold."

Strictly speaking, A. S. M. Hutchinson does not belong to the younger generation, since he has recently entered the roaring forties, but his books are so filled with the spirit of youth that he may here be classified with his juniors; indeed, there are pages in *This Freedom* that are childish. He might easily have been a profes-

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sional humourist; humour is the ground quality of his first novel, and rises to the surface in three of the others. But in *This Freedom* he not only threw aside the motley of the jester, he repeatedly begs his readers not to laugh—evidently obsessed by the same terror of humour felt by Nichols and Mackenzie. He knew in advance that one snicker would be fatal, and his fears have been justified.

When I read an advance copy of *This Freedom* last June, I thought during the first half of the story that the author had surpassed his best previous efforts—those early chapters are amazingly well done! Then as I approached the end of the book I was taken by acute dismay—if I, a sympathetic reader, with all the good-will in the world, could not swallow this hysteria, what on earth would the professional reviewers do with it, nay, do *to* it? They did exactly what I thought they would do. The book was formally published on the first of September, and during the latter days of August, I could distinctly hear the sharpening of beaks all over the country—the reviewers were getting ready to bite. The novel seems to invite ridicule, the author's guard is down, and there are vital points so easy to attack that the reviewers could not miss them. It is a long time since they had such a morsel, and with what rapture they devoured it! It was a certainty that *This Freedom* would be received with derisive laughter.

Yet, while Mr. Hutchinson has only himself

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to blame for his hysterical style, crazy rhetoric, ridiculous overemphasis, and absurd anticlimax, it is not altogether his fault that the driving idea of his novel has been so generally misunderstood. I am grateful for the book with all its faults. In the earlier chapters there are displayed such beauty, force, and penetration as could come only from the inspiration of genius; and even if the latter half were negligible or worse, nothing can destroy the excellence of its high points. Now the reviewers seem to think he tried to prove one thing in the first half of the book and exactly the contrary in the second half. I do not see this at all. The House of Men is all wrong—it contains no place for girls and women. But the House of Cards is all wrong too; it contains no place for mothers and children. Nowhere does the author intimate that the last state should have been like the first. What he makes clear is that in obtaining freedom for oneself, one cannot escape the responsibilities forced on one by both nature and religion. In both cases he attacks individual selfishness, showing that it leads to ruin. Trained experts cannot take a mother's place, and a mother has no right to let them try. Only in service is there perfect freedom.

Mr. Hutchinson has attacked, perhaps, the greatest of all modern problems, the home. Ask any school-teacher what he or she thinks of the importance of home influences. Many children are inexplicable to their parents; they

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are an enigma, a source of chronic anxiety. Parents vainly hope that the school-teacher will succeed in a job where they have failed, or which they have shirked. "My boy cannot concentrate." They hope for a miracle, that somehow the boy, or the girl, who has done exactly what pleased him at home, will in school be transformed by discipline. As we can understand religion, art, and music only through love, so parents and children can reach an understanding only along that road. Now that road means self-sacrifice on the part of parents, but if they bring children into the world, they ought not to transfer their responsibilities. I have seen scores of boys that betray instantly the fact that they have come from a good home, where their relations with their parents have been frankly intimate. And I have seen others where the boy has evidently lived in one world and his parents in another, with no means of communication. Headmasters dread the Christmas holidays, knowing that some boys and girls will come back to school jaded, listless, exhausted, unfit for anything.

Mr. Hutchinson's excess of earnestness made him overshoot his mark; but if his detractors would stop jeering, they might learn something. They might learn, for example, that what parents need is vital, ardent, unaffected religion, expressed not in sanctimonious stock phrases, which disgust any healthy boy or girl, but in mental attitude and daily conduct. The first-

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fruit of religion should show itself in consideration and respect for another's personality, even if that other should happen to be your own child.

It is a difficult thing to bring up children, because the hardest task on earth is to set a good example, and here it must be done every day. If a father tells his boy not to lie, and then lies to the railroad ticket-agent about the boy's age, that man's religion is vain.

Although Robert Nichols's defiant preface is more interesting than the play which follows it (true also of certain productions by Dryden and Shaw), *Guilty Souls* is decidedly worth reading. It is significant that so passionately Christian a play should come from a man living in Japan. He speaks with hostility of the church; but his hostility to that institution is caused by the belief that it is not sufficiently Christian. Sin and the accusing conscience and redemption of the soul here and now by Jesus Christ are the themes of this strange drama; the fact that the injured person is the tempter of the sinner reminds one infallibly of *The Scarlet Letter*. Mr. Nichols was never so ardent a Christian in England as he has been while occupying the chair of English literature in the Tokio university, a suggestive fact. It is fashionable among certain groups of Englishmen and Americans who hate Christianity to advocate the superior claims of Buddhism and Mohammedanism. The best way for them to recover

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from this phase is to live awhile in the East. That admirable young poet, James Elroy Flecker, used to profess an ardent admiration for Mohammedanism; he was cured by living in Constantinople, and died a Catholic. And now we find another young poet, Robert Nichols, living in Tokio, and exalting the Cross as the symbol of salvation.

In his new novel, *Babbitt*, Sinclair Lewis has exchanged whips for scorpions. With the possible exception of the shadowy young radical attorney, there is not a single character in the book who combines intelligence, charm, and character. (And yet how many excellent men and women I know in Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, Buffalo, New York, and New Haven!) There is not a person in this novel who is as useful to society as Doctor Kennicott, in *Main Street*. Mr. Lewis said in his haste that all men were liars, and after mature reflexion sees no reason to revise the statement. The city is, if anything, worse than the village—the centres of corruption being not the red-light district, but the church and the Rotary Club. It is interesting to observe just now that the contemptuous epithet *Victorian* is, among certain groups, being replaced by *Rotarian*. If they wish to convey the idea that such a one is both pompous and hypocritical, they call him a Rotarian. That he is also an active church-member goes without saying. It takes some grace for me to

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appreciate the beauties of *Babbitt*, for I am both a Rotarian and a church-member. To belong to either organisation places one beyond the pale of the intelligentsia; to belong to both is intellectual damnation. Yet I have no intention of resigning. When a certain orator resigned from Ford's peace-ship party, and told the reporter that the association was made up of cranks and fools, the agile reporter asked Henry Ford to comment on this criticism; over the telephone Mr. Ford told him that there might be something in the remark, but that it was clear the situation was being improved by a process of resignation.

All Rotarians and church-members should read *Babbitt*, for it may do us good; others will read it with smug complacency, thanking themselves that they are not as other men are. There is subtle flattery in *Babbitt* and in *Main Street* for all persons whose major occupation is criticism, and what a lot of them there must be! We who are working on the inside know that Rotary and the church are not so bad as they are here represented; but if that is the way we appear to outsiders, we ought to realise the fact, and perhaps do something about it. The ideals of the church and of Rotary are presumably the ideals of Mr. Lewis—individual and community betterment. What, then, is wrong, and in what way shall it be made right?

Mr. Lewis seems to think that the unpardonable sin is "boosting," but perhaps this depends

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partly on what is boosted. There never was a time in my recollection when popular novels were boosted as they are now; and I do not know any class of business men who have a more chronic itch for publicity than young writers. Nor have I ever seen groups of business men more eagerly engaged in boosting one another and themselves than is observable among some groups of poets and novelists. Still, I have no desire to take refuge in the *tu quoque*, nor in complacent optimism. Sinclair Lewis hits the big town as Booth Tarkington hit it in *The Turmoil*, because the wrong gods are worshipped: size, population, noise, traffic, factories on the water-front, enormous and frequent "turn-overs"—instead of quality, removal of causes of disease, sound, enlightened, and honest school administration, cleanliness and sanitation that shall give dignity to all forms of labour, the recognition of beauty as an essential element in life.

Those who thought Mr. Lewis was a man of one book will have to revise their opinion. Had they read his first novel, *Our Mr. Wrenn*, they would have known better. *Babbitt* is an improvement and an advance on *Main Street*. The latter was an encyclopædia of the small town, and those who complained that the novel was too long might, with equal justice, complain of the length of the dictionary. Its abundance of detail is an essential part of the scheme, and therefore artistic. But there is more development, more of a story, in *Babbitt*. It would be

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a finer realistic novel if it were not so exclusively a satire. Various persons are exhibited merely to show their intellectual and moral filth. If Babbitt were really the typical business man, then our business men are mainly dwarfs in intellect, giants in conceit, and degenerates in morality. Babbitt is not the typical business man, but an ironical and exceedingly clever caricature.

Mr. Lewis's greatest talent is mimicry. He is an amazingly brilliant mimic. He can take a train from New Haven to New York, and reproduce in manner, voice, and intonation a half-dozen types on that train so that they are visibly re-created. The mimic is usually a caricaturist and a satirist; and Mr. Lewis is no exception to this rule. Caricature, by overemphasising certain peculiarities, makes the picture more convincing, for such are the salient characteristics that separate the victim from other men. The satirist has little appreciation of the virtue of co-operation, of sinking one's interests in the endeavour to advance the general welfare. To him organised effort is ridiculous. So long as he has enough to eat, he is an individualist.

Doubtless he would be the first to disclaim an attack exclusively on *American* small towns and cities. Nearly every country has its Main Street and its Zenith. The solution is that every person who would lead the life of the mind and of the spirit must make his own world, and neither depend on his environment

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nor surrender to it. Those who, like Emerson, would live in the spirit are pilgrims and strangers on earth; but if their aspirations are backed by energy, they can live a full life in either Gopher Prairie or Zenith.

Some of our new novels begin well, continue well, and end with distressing anticlimaxes. *Babbitt* has a last page that is wholly admirable, which required for its conception and execution not only a satirist but an artist.

The fact that these uncompromising satires of Mr. Lewis vie with Harold Bell Wright in popularity would seem to indicate that Americans are not all typical Main Street residents, or typical Babbitts. So there is practical comfort for the author and hope for the world.

Willa Cather's *One of Ours* is a disappointing book, for after the first part, which is filled with sharp delineations of character and pungent exhalations from the farm, the novel becomes a sentimental, conventional, commonplace story of the war, with the familiar formulas. She exercises her privilege as a novelist in making the pacifist a hypocritical, profiteering sneak, just as Mr. Lewis scourges church-members. There is no use in being a novelist unless you can take potshots at your favourite detestations.

As a war story with the scenes in France, *One of Ours* does not compare with Warwick Deeping's *House of Adventure*, and as a picture

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of the West it is inferior to Herbert Quick's *Vandemark's Folly*, where the characters are not compelled to do sentry-go for abstractions.

American novels of the year that I recommend for their fidelity to life are *Certain People of Importance*, by Kathleen Norris, where the members of a huge family team are driven through five hundred pages by a skilled charioteer; *For Richer, for Poorer*, by Harold H. Armstrong, an honest story of married life, where the irresolute hero is finally redeemed by a great passion, just as he is damned like an ill-roasted egg in Webb Waldron's *The Road to the World*. (This latter novel has a unique interest for me, because the Michigan town where most of the scenes are laid is called Huron City, by which I suppose he means Bay City; at this blessed moment I am writing in the real Huron City, which was fifty years ago a lumbering town on Lake Huron, and is now happily without a railway, post-office, or telegraph. Huron City is my earthly paradise, and I may be pardoned for my excitement in seeing it for the first time in a novel.)

Another admirable American story is *Bennett Malin*, by Elsie Singmaster. The hero is an original person, though his crime is like unto that committed by Mr. Milne's *Blayds*; the hero's wife is a triumph of delineation. There is a quiet distinction in the style of this book which indicates that the author knows exactly what she is

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about. I predict that Elsie Singmaster will stand high in contemporary literature.

Novels of no great literary merit, but prodigiously exciting to those who love excitement, are *Captain Blood*, by Sabatini, written in the manner that Stevenson called "horrid fun"; *The Whelps of the Wolf*, a Hudson Bay story by George Marsh; and *The Van Roon*, a thrilling narrative by the accomplished J. C. Snaith. It is a trifle in comparison with his magnificent *Broke of Covenden*, but an altogether charming trifle.

Those who worry about the occasional big sale of a book that is worthless or worse should remember that the standard works are continuously the best sellers. One of the most colossal undertakings of modern times is *Everyman's Library*, Mr. Dent's proudest achievement. The *Loeb Classical Library* has a distinction all its own; the Oxford Press *World's Classics* are irresistible little volumes where one may be stimulated by Tolstoi or soothed by Trollope; Scribner's *Modern Student's Library* is an epitome of English literature in handy volumes; Boni & Liveright's *Modern Library* keeps the more important modern books easily accessible. Nearly every publisher has a pet series, where masterpieces are reprinted in clear type, with attractive binding, and sold at low prices. The Nelson series is a public benefaction. These little cloth-bound books, feather-weight

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and with large print, are to be found all over the world; but does every one know of the Nelsons in French? Here you can read in the original Dumas' *Les Trois Mousquetaires* and *Monte Cristo*, Victor Hugo complete, and scores of other authors. Whether in French or in English the Nelsons are the best books for train-reading; the volumes are so small and the type is so big.

To a party of four or five travelling together, who wish to read on trains and when marooned by storms, and whose baggage must be rigorously limited, I recommend the following method: Buy a book of one of these "series," let one member of the party read the first two pages, tear them out and hand them to his neighbour. In a few moments five persons are reading the same copy of the same book at the same time, can throw the finally read pages out of the window, and can all have the pleasure of discussing the work at dinner that evening, while it is still fresh in every one's recollection. This is better than reading aloud, for when one is reading aloud, the others fall asleep.

Nothing is more untrue than the famous epigram, "Sleep is an opinion." Often we fall asleep, not when we are bored, but when we are interested; our minds are taken off our troubles and worries, which keep us awake, and we glide into slumber. I do not know, after a prolonged experience with both evils, which is worse: to go to sleep in public when you wish to stay awake, or to lie awake alone when you would

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give everything to be asleep. Mrs. De Morgan was more interested in her husband's stories than in anything else; when he read the manuscript to her, she usually fell asleep.

For those who wish children to become familiar with the constellations and the planets, I know of no better books than Gaylord Johnson's *The Star People* and *The Sky Movies*. These are copiously illustrated, the language is skilfully adapted to children, and thus I find it at the right level for my own mind, most works on science being to me incomprehensible. Many years ago I was invited to teach elementary mathematics, and I declined, because there are no elementary mathematics. With these two books by Johnson, supplemented by Milham's *How to Identify the Stars*, and armed with a pocket flash-light, youth and age may together find the skies at night interesting.

Although book-reviewing is often carelessly and hastily done, I do not think, outside of my own writings, I have ever seen a more badly composed sentence than the following, which I discovered in a review of Hergesheimer's *The Lay Anthony*, in the London *Times* Literary Supplement, 22 July 1922: "Various women in various situations make determined assaults upon his senses, but the scent of white lilacs wins in the nick of time and the poor fellow sets out anew, always without a cent." Read that

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phrase aloud, and see if you do not agree with me that the hero of the novel should now be called Scent Anthony.

It is good news that Stanislavski is coming to America in January, with the Artistic Theatre Company of Moscow; I have never seen them, but if what Maurice Baring, Granville-Barker, Oliver Sayler, and other visitors say is true, their performances are the finest in the world. I look forward with eagerness to seeing Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*, with the author's widow playing the rôle she created in 1904. I wish that in the repertoire Maeterlinck's *Blue Bird* might be included, for this theatre in Moscow had the honour of giving the world's *première*. We are promised other plays by Chekhov, and Gorki's masterpiece, *In the Depths*. The company should make a good normal school for other managers and actors.

Maurice Baring's immensely interesting autobiography, *The Puppet Show of Memory*, which I find both stimulating and amusing, should be reread, at least in the Russian chapters, in preparation for the Moscow Expeditionary Force.

Why is it that in America we have so seldom an opportunity to hear one of the greatest of all operas—Mozart's *Don Giovanni*? Lytton Strachey quotes Stendhal as saying: "I can imagine nothing more distasteful to me than a

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thirty-mile walk through the mud; but I would take one at this moment if I knew that I should hear a good performance of *Don Giovanni* at the end of it." So would I.

V

LATELY I have been going back to Jules Verne, and reading him with the double pleasure that comes from good narrative and happy reminiscence. To read a youthful favourite after the lapse of many years is like revisiting some European scene first beheld in boyish rapture; the principal is intact, and the accumulated interest a notable addition. The delight I find to-day in the French magician is not caused by the fact that some of his dreams have come true; as a mere reader, I do not care whether his stories are possible or impossible; nor do I know whether or not I should rejoice in the practicability of the submarine, for from the human-welfare point of view it would thus far seem to be a liability rather than an asset. It is as an imaginative, not as a scientific, writer that Jules Verne appeals to me.

For this reason I find the old solemn accusations made against his scientific accuracy decidedly amusing; and once more, not because he occasionally happened to confound his adversaries by guessing right, like some charlatan who predicts the weather for the next winter, but because such attacks were and are just as valuable as solemn impeachments of the accuracy of Munchausen. I wonder how many remember "M. W. H." of the *New York Sun*, who

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used to write a full-page review every week of some new book, and write it with such detail that it became quite unnecessary to buy the book? His judgment in many fields of literature was sound and his criticisms penetrating; but this morning I have been reading again his portentous condemnation of Jules Verne, which he handed down from the solar chair more than forty years ago. The following paragraph gives a fair idea of the whole essay: "The astonishing vogue of these productions constitutes their chief claim to criticism, but they may also be said to challenge it by a special eminence in worthlessness. In most works of the kind extravagant blunders are only occasional, or at worst sporadic, relieved by intervals of tolerable accuracy; but our French author's unverity must be accounted chronic, since he can rarely complete a dozen pages without some perversion of fact."

I remember how I resented this attack in my boyhood; the author denounced for "inaccuracy" was my friend, who by his magic had taken me to the centre of the earth, twenty thousand leagues under the seas, around the world in eighty days, to the moon, and given me a delightful round trip to the planets and back, on a luxurious comet. I then vaguely resented Mr. Hazeltine's animadversions; now they seem funny enough, a greater curiosity than anything to be found in the Frenchman's romances.

Nor was Jules Verne received with much

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favour by French critics, in spite of what Mr. Hazeltine said to the contrary; they did not take him seriously as an author until millions of foreign children learned to love France and Frenchmen through him. One winter day in 1903, being in Amiens to see the cathedral, I called at his house to tell him of the happiness he had added to my childhood; the housemaid said he was out walking near the great church, and, as we drew near to the façade, we met him. He was a white-bearded old gentleman, with an expression of peculiar benevolence, as though he carried in his dear old face some reflexion of the adoring gratitude of all the children in the world. We talked a few moments, and he went on his way. A few years later, when I revisited Amiens, he had departed on an adventure which I hope was more thrilling than anything he had imagined in his books; we found not him, but his statue. And it is pleasant to remember that the statue had been dedicated with tributes from members of the French Academy.

To-day his stories have lost none of their thrill; and to those who have neither the time nor the money for extensive travel, I recommend a journey to the Mysterious Island.

The most important announcement of any new book this season is the news of a second volume of poems from Alfred E. Housman, the author of *A Shropshire Lad*. That collection of

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original and beautiful lyrics was published in 1896; my wonder at their extraordinary perfection is equalled only by my wonder at the succeeding twenty-five years of silence. How could a man sing in so pure and clear a tone as to keep us all in hushed expectation of the next note, and leave us in that attitude? I should think it would be as difficult for a poet to maintain silence as for a bird; but nothing has come from him in all these years. To every lover of poetry the announcement of a second volume from Professor Housman is the real news of the world; I can hardly wait for it to appear.

Among American books of verse in 1922, I have seen nothing better than *The Black Panther*, by John Hall Wheelock. This is not only notable in itself but marks a distinct advance on his previous work. He seems to be steadily progressing in his art. One fleck that I should like to see eliminated is the word "beseeched," which, although Mrs. Humphry Ward used it, is not now good English. It is clear that in this particular stanza the correct form of the verb would have been inharmonious; but better take a synonym than resort to "beseeched."

A genuine American poet who has been quiet too long is Anna Hempstead Branch. She has been giving her days and nights to promoting the cause of poetry through the interesting and effective method of the *Unbound Anthology*. But it is not necessary that such work, important

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as it is, should be done by a creative artist. She is one of the most distinguished of all living poets; and I begrudge any less valuable employment of her time. One of her richest sources of inspiration is the Bible; last year she read the whole Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, through in a few days, to discover for herself whether it was or was not a unique Book, with a Divine Revelation; her silent and steady communion with its pages convinced her that it is in truth the Word of God.

It takes some courage to stand up for Alfred Noyes. But as I never allow mob opinion to influence my views on either politics or poetry, I wish to call attention to his latest and most ambitious undertaking, *The Torch-Bearers*, of which the first volume, *The Watchers of the Sky*, has already appeared. He was inspired to write this work by the largest telescope in the world, the one-hundred-inch reflector on the top of Mount Wilson in California. *The Watchers* is a biographical history of the progress of astronomy, written in a poetical style worthy of the subject. Alfred Noyes was the first of the remarkable group of English poets of the twentieth century to attract general attention; the almost universal praise with which his earlier poems were received gave way to detraction and abuse; so that the large number of reviewers who merely follow the prevailing literary stock quotations know perfectly well that just now

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it is not at all "the thing" to betray any admiration for his poems. In spite of his excess baggage, which all poets except Milton have carried, I think he will survive many writers whom it is in 1922 fashionable to salute.

Speaking of Milton, I have already received from a correspondent one candidate for the Ignoble Prize; the conditions for competition were given in the November issue. My friend, a man of wide reading and good taste, cannot apparently endure *Paradise Lost*. For my part, I not only admire the majesty and sublimity of that epic, I find it steadily *interesting*. More people ought to read Milton for pleasure—the pleasure is in his consummate art. Stevenson, in his essay on Walt Whitman, which still remains the best I know, said that he would not disinherit a son who could not admire the Camden sage; but that he could not keep the peace with any one who failed to appreciate the choruses in *Samson Agonistes*.

Can anything be done to prevent dramatic critics from printing in detail the plot of every new play? I "take in" five daily New York newspapers, partly in order to read first-night impressions from trained and honest observers. I am interested to know whether they think the new piece is, or is not, worth seeing; whether or not it will, in their judgment, achieve popular success; whether or not it is original or thoughtful or important; but at the fateful paragraph

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beginning, "The story of the play is as follows," I skip, and often find that I have to skip the bulk of the so-called "criticism." The one thing about a new play that I emphatically do not want to know is the plot; to know that in advance is to be robbed of much of the pleasure in seeing it. So true is this, that every playbill of *The Bat* requested persons in the audience not to give away the *dénouement*. Why on earth do critics spell it all out for us? If their object is to lessen the number of spectators, I congratulate them on the success of their method. But I suspect that the real reason is that, not having enough ideas to fill the requisite space for criticism, they resort to retelling the story, which entails no mental effort, and makes the "criticism" look well to those who do not read it. I never like to see this space-filling process even in a book-review; in an account of a new play it is unpardonable. I think, too, that every dramatic critic should tell us whether the piece is decent or not; for there are many who wish to go if it is, and others who wish to go if it is not, and both classes ought to know this fact in advance.

Bad manners in literary criticism have become quite common, and are as a rule resorted to by those reviewers and critics who cannot manage subtler methods of annihilation. The bludgeon and the brickbat have taken the place of the rapier. Not only is this true but many

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readers look forward with delight to these exhibitions of buffoonery and abuse, their idea of wit being horseplay and their notion of disapproval being on the level of a kick. This constantly growing method of "literary criticism" seems to have been borrowed from the political arena; it is analogous to what used to be called Tillmanism. Some of the more aged readers of these pages may remember the time when that aristocratic, courageous, and cultivated gentleman, Wade Hampton, represented South Carolina in the United States Senate; he really represented her, being typical of the finest type of breeding and manners we associate with the Old South. He was succeeded by a man with a pitchfork, who at first shocked but ultimately delighted thousands of Americans by an exhibition of language and manners quite otherwise than traditional. At first he seemed out of place; but soon his picturesque habits of speech amused the groundlings to such an extent that Tillman became a decidedly popular man, not only in the Senate but throughout the country, and a whole school of imitators sprang up who had all of his grotesqueness with none of his sincerity. Coarseness was taken for virility.

Much of the same change has taken place in what passes for literary criticism; readers demand that it be "snappy," highly spiced, and as brutal as possible. I cannot think that this new method is any more effective than the old,

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either in politics or in English composition. Let me illustrate. A United States Congressman, who has since gone to his ultimate reward, was making a speech on the tariff, in a campaigning tour, when he was interrupted by a question from the audience; looking contemptuously at the individual who had ventured to heckle him, he shouted: "Go wash your neck!" which was thought to be very funny by the crowd. Not long after that a man running for the highest office in our country was similarly interrupted by a questioner, and he roared: "You are the kind of man who works exclusively with his mouth." Leaving out entirely the standard of good manners, let us see if either of these replies seems as effective as the one made by John Morley in an English general election. At the conclusion of his speech he asked for the support of his hearers, when one excited individual leaped up and screamed: "I would rather vote for the devil!" Mr. Morley, in a quiet and courteous voice, replied: "Quite so; but in case your friend declines to run, may I not then count on your support?"

Perhaps the best retort I have ever heard of occurred when Thackeray was a candidate for Parliament, and was opposed by Edward Cardwell. The two competitors happened to meet in the course of the campaign, and after a friendly discussion, Thackeray said it would be a good fight, "and may the best man win." "Oh, I hope not!" said his rival.

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The Gentleman ought not to become obsolete. John Galsworthy, in his fine drama *The Skin Game*, has emphasised the real danger of fighting. The danger is that in a skin-for-skin contest, gentility will prove to be worth nothing; for it will be sacrificed in the desire for victory. Or, in other words, if the enemy cheats, we must cheat too. During the recent war the worst possible argument for reprisals always seemed to me to be one constantly urged; namely, that we must treat the enemy as he treats us. In other words, we must allow our foes to determine our own moral standards, and imitate them in the very things that gave us the reason for fighting them. There is where we can take a lesson in manners from Julius Cæsar. In that interesting little volume *The Marginal Notes of Lord Macaulay*, being extracts from the comments he jotted down on the margins of the books he read, Sir George Otto Trevelyan quotes the following. Cicero had written Cæsar a letter expressing his grateful appreciation for the clemency shown by the latter to his captured foes, and Cæsar replied to this epistle in words which contained, so Macaulay used to say, the finest sentence ever written: "I triumph and rejoice that my action should have obtained your approval. Nor am I disturbed when I hear it said that those whom I have sent off alive and free will again bear arms against me; for there is nothing which I so much covet as that I should be like myself and they like them-

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selves." And on the margin of the book by that sentence, Macaulay wrote: "Noble fellow!"

Even if the literary glory of the American Augustans should fade, their personal characters ought to form an imperishable model for men of letters and for all sorts and conditions of men. I have been reading two excellent books: *Memories of a Hostess*, compiled from the diaries of Mrs. Fields, by M. A. De Wolfe Howe, and *Glimpses of Authors*, by Caroline Ticknor. I heartily recommend both these volumes to all who are interested in the literary history of our country, and to all who love to know more intimately those who are best worth knowing. Entirely apart from the question of creative genius, I do not believe there has ever been in any country a finer group of men than the leading American writers of 1840-1880. Hawthorne, Emerson, Longfellow, Whittier, Holmes, Lowell—every man a gentleman of the finest type, sincere, considerate, affectionate, loyal, truthful, and clean. When these intimate friends met one another at the house of Mrs. Fields, they met as peers; that any one of them could be guilty of treachery, disloyalty, meanness, or vulgarity simply never occurred to their minds. Their native wit in conversation was heightened by their personal charm. How strange it is that this is the group of men who are now accused of hypocrisy and insincerity and cowardice; when it is impossible to discover an occasion when any

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of them uttered what he did not in his heart believe to be the truth. Is there any person in literary or public life to-day who can surpass Emerson in honesty and sincerity? Is there a man anywhere who is more truthful and courageous in the expression of political opinion than Hawthorne? His views at the time of the Civil War seemed to his most intimate friends to be not only false but sacrilegious; yet they had such respect for the nobility and integrity of his character that no blur disfigured the shining surface of their friendship. Mrs. Fields detested the political attitude of Hawthorne, and yet this is what she wrote in her diary: "He will dedicate the volume to Franklin Pierce, the Democrat—a most unpopular thing just now, but friendship of the purest stimulates him, and the ruin in prospect for his book because of this resolve does not move him from his purpose. Such adherence is indeed noble. Hawthorne requires all that popularity can give him in a pecuniary way for the support of his family."

Emerson, like his other friends, cut out the dedication from his copy of the book, for even some of those who support the government in time of war may also be sincere.

In both of these volumes of literary reminiscences Dickens plays a large part; and much new light is thrown on his last visit to America and on his personality and character. Dickens hated a pencil, and wrote even brief notes and memoranda in ink. He always used a quill, and

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had discovered a blue ink which needed no blotting-paper, a method of drying that he especially disliked. If Dickens were alive to-day, it would not be necessary for him to use blue ink; I could tell him of an ink that writes jet-black, and that dries instantly. I do not like coloured inks, and I hate with intense fervour the kind of ink commonly used in fountain-pens. It writes a pale blue, and turns black some time after your death. A pale-blue ink always seems to me to indicate a spineless personality. And I hate with equal intensity the kind of ink that sticks up on the written page like shrimps' eyes, or letters for the blind; and dries after the lapse of hours. A blotter never absorbs it, and it resists every attack except time.

I suppose no month passes without the appearance of some new book on Dickens; one of the latest is that by Mr. Alexander Woollcott, the dramatic critic of the New York *Herald*, *Mr. Dickens Goes to the Play*. Dickens, as every one knows, could have been a great actor. I recommend a pilgrimage to Sessler's bookshop, in Philadelphia, where the visitor will be shown a folio by Ben Jonson, containing on the fly-leaf the date of the memorable performance of *Every Man in His Humour*, 21 September 1845, with the autograph of every one of the actors; Dickens as *Bobadil*, Forster as *Kitely*, Jerrold as *Master Stephen*, Lemon as *Brainworm*, Leech as *Master Matthew*.

And as the novels and characters of Dickens

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are proof against time, so his final words on leaving America in 1868 would seem not impertinent to-day: "Points of difference there have been, points of difference there are, points of difference there probably will be, between the two great peoples. . . . I do believe that from the great majority of honest minds on both sides, there cannot be absent the conviction that it would be better for this globe to be riven by an earthquake, fired by a comet, overrun by an iceberg, and abandoned to the Arctic fox or bear, than that it should present the spectacle of those two great nations, each one of whom has, in its own way and hour, striven so hard and so successfully for freedom, ever again being arrayed the one against the other."

The year 1922 has been memorable for the number of excellent biographies and autobiographies. Mrs. Stirling's *William De Morgan and his Wife* is a permanent memorial to a man of genius and a brilliant woman, and is filled with thought-stirring anecdotes and irresistible stories; Burton Hendrick's *Life of Walter H. Page* is so important that I shall discuss it with some detail in a later number; I am also reserving for special comment the autobiographies of those admirable Americans Augustus Thomas and John Drew, whose names are an honour both to the stage and to citizenship. Let me earnestly recommend again Maurice Baring's *The Puppet Show of Memory*, a book to be ship-

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wrecked with, for its characters and meditations would enliven the most complete physical solitude; and in addition to introspective autobiographies, like Mr. Lewisohn's *Up Stream*, no one should overlook the more humble but thrilling personal history of Arthur Mason, called *Ocean Echoes*. This is his second attempt as an author, and is fully equal to his delightful *Flying Bo'sun*. Mason ran away from home, and his actual experiences make an ordinary romance seem tame.

It is my guess that H. G. Wells is the author of *Number 87*, but the publishers refuse to tell me whether my conjecture is correct or not. Although Wells is a prophet, a theologian, and a social reformer, of all his works the one that I shall most gladly read again is *The Wheels of Chance*. Some visitor borrowed my copy, and paid it the compliment of keeping it. I confidently recommend *The Wheels of Chance* to those who love a good story. It is one of the best I know, as *The Soul of a Bishop* is one of the worst.

I never neglect a new book by Ben Ames Williams, a born narrator. The latest, *Black Pawl*, is filled with stirring fights and perilous adventures, and the hero is original. What is perhaps even more original is that the finest person in his novel is a Christian missionary. (I used to wonder whether all novels ridiculed missionaries, or only those I happened to read; just

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as I wonder whether all trains are late, or only those I take.) It is rather curious that foreign missionaries, those bold soldiers of God, who give up home, congenial society, intimate friends, and the luxuries of civilisation, should be so often presented by comfort-hunting novelists as weak, namby-pamby, insincere, and absurd. They fight not only with the prince of the powers of the air, they fight against poverty, disease, and sickness; it would be interesting if the brown, yellow, and black people whom they save from pain and death could know that these men and women are receiving in their own countries a continual back-fire of abuse and ridicule. But the soldiers of science and the soldiers of religion, who sacrifice themselves in the effort to save human life, have never seemed to the stay-at-homes particularly heroic. Ben Williams's missionary is the best one I have met with in fiction since the wonderful old man in Lavedan's play *Le Duel*.

Prejudice plays far too large a part in our opinions and in our conversation. I think it would be well if every one, on rising in the morning, made a silent but determined declaration of individual independence, the only independence worth anything. Let us talk less about democracy and become more democratic; let us talk less about truth and speak it more frequently; let us talk less about freedom and become free. One of the great moments in *Les Misérables* is that following the impassioned

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harangue by Marius, the idolater of Napoleon. Marius has worked himself up to a grand climax: "To make the French Empire the successor of the Roman Empire, to be the Grand Nation and bring forth the Grand Army, to send your legions flying over the whole earth as a mountain sends its eagles on all sides, to vanquish, to rule, to strike with thunder, to be in Europe a kind of golden people through constant glory, to sound through history a Titan trumpet-call, to conquer the world twice, by conquest and by splendour, this is sublime, and what could be more grand?"

"To be free," said Combeferre.

VI

It seems strange to me that among the "reforms" which have been suggested in modern education during the last forty years, no one has ventured to attack the study of mathematics. It is always assumed by the ignorant that Latin and Greek are useless studies and that mathematics are valuable and practical. The truth is that for every occupation except one for which higher mathematics are a prerequisite, like civil engineering, Greek and Latin are more useful. For the preacher, the lawyer, the doctor, the journalist, and for nearly all business men the classics are more important than mathematics. Training in these ancient languages, with the accompanying culture and history, with the aid given to the meaning of English words and to the mastery of English style and expression—where does the binomial theorem stand in comparison?

That a sound education in Latin and Greek is of value in public life may be observed by regarding the leading English statesmen of to-day and of the immediate past. Did these studies unfit men like Gladstone, Balfour, and Lord Morley for practical affairs?

I believe in the equal dignity of all subjects of learning. But it seems absurd for a university to require neither Latin nor Greek for a

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Bachelor of Arts degree, and yet insist on the higher mathematics. I would at least allow every student a free choice as between classics and mathematics. And if I were a pupil, I should not hesitate a moment.

I have no doubt that for those who have a natural aptitude for the study, mathematics are valuable as intellectual discipline and training, whether one will use them definitely or not. They are particularly valuable for novelists and playwrights. But for those who have no gift and no inclination, mathematics are often worse than useless—they are a positive injury. Because I was forced to do so, I studied mathematics faithfully and conscientiously from the age of three to the age of twenty-one; that is, from the time I first went to school until the end of my junior year in college. After long division, it is my conviction that nearly every hour spent on the subject was thrown away. It was worse than thrown away; the time would have been better employed in manual labour, in outdoor exercise, or in sleep. Mathematics were a constant discouragement and heart-break; the harder I worked, the less result I obtained. How bitterly I regret those hours and days and weeks and months and years, which might have been so much more profitably employed on studies that would have stimulated my mind instead of stupefying it!

I was always an ambitious student, and wished to excel; therefore it was necessary for

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me to put more time on mathematics than on any other course. Even so, my grade in mathematics was never high, and I could not possibly have been graduated from Yale had I not in other subjects stood so well that failures in mathematical examinations were treated with leniency.

Which fact leads me to state that scores of fairly intelligent American boys have been deprived of the advantages of a college education because of their inability to attain a passing grade in mathematics. They have been sacrificed year after year to this Moloch—is it worth while?

I am aware that Henry Adams, in his autobiography, regretted that he had not received more instruction in higher mathematics. But surely his view of life was pessimistic enough without that.

Let me repeat. I am not saying for every one this study is fruitless or harmful. I make only two points. First, that for the average man or woman, the classics are more valuable than mathematics; second, that in a liberal college course, mathematics should be offered to all and forced on none.

It is pleasant to remember that not all ambassadors to America are politicians; the visits of opera-singers, actors, and novelists are a civilising influence. A feature of the present theatrical season is the presentation of French plays by members of the *Comédie Française*; I

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wish that Cécile Sorel would give us an opportunity to see and hear her in Alfred de Musset's charming and stately comedy, *Les Caprices de Marianne*. Of all the pieces, ancient and modern, that I have seen at the *Théâtre Français*, I think that particular play, with Mlle. Sorel as the heroine, made the most beautiful and the most lasting impression. It was a combination of the three arts of painting, poetry, and music.

I was fortunate enough to hear the first performance of the opera *Die Walküre* at the Metropolitan this season. It was certainly the best cast assembled in any German opera in America since the days before the war; in fact, it was as good a cast as could probably be gathered together anywhere in the world at this moment. Mr. Taucher made his American début as Siegmund; it was an important occasion, for it is expected that he will be the leading Wagnerian tenor for the season. He more than fulfilled expectations—his voice is a true tenor, not a high barytone; the first notes he released sent a thrill of satisfaction through the house. His acting was intelligent and manly, his figure astonishingly graceful for a German tenor. Miss Jeritza was, of course, splendid as Sieglinde; she was the chief acquisition of the Metropolitan forces last year, and she is never disappointing. The love scene in the first act could hardly have been nearer perfection. The veteran Whitehill, who was something of a vet-

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eran when I heard him in *Tannhäuser* at Bayreuth in 1904, is always a capable Wotan; his voice, however, is becoming worn. Paul Bender, of Munich, who made his first trip to America in 1922, was a superb Hunding, in appearance, manner, and voice. He is one of the best bass singers in the world. A man of colossal stature, like most of the great basses, Edouard de Reszké, Plançon, Shaliapin, he is a consummate artist, with a magnificent organ. Before the war, in residence at Munich, I heard him twice a week at the opera for six months, and he was always fine. Former visitors to Munich will remember with delight the glorious singing of the barytone Feinhals, who seemed ever to be above his average; in such different rôles as Don Giovanni and Wotan he was absolutely satisfying. I hope very much that we may have the opportunity of hearing Bender sing the part of Wotan in *Die Walküre*; it is usually sung by a barytone; Edouard de Reszké declined it, because he thought the music too high for his voice. Wagner, however, left it on record that he preferred to have this part sung by a "high bass" rather than a barytone. In the season of 1911-12 Mr. Bender attempted it at Munich, and the critics were wildly enthusiastic.

Curiously enough, that pessimist and atheist, Schopenhauer, thought that *Die Walküre* was immoral and ought not to be allowed on the stage; it is perhaps fortunate that we never apply the tests of realism to so romantic an

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art. When he read the score, he wrote on the margin of the Siegmund-Sieglinde duet in the first act words like "horrible!" "shameful!" and finally, at the stage direction, "Curtain," he wrote, "It is high time!"

The death of Arthur Nikisch is an irreparable loss. He was undoubtedly the foremost orchestra conductor in the world. Fortunately for me, I was a graduate student at Harvard when he first came to this country to direct the Boston Symphony; so that I had every opportunity to see him in action. He was the first man I ever saw conduct an orchestra without the score; although the great Hans von Bülow, whom I heard only as a pianist, used to have not only no score himself, but sometimes he would not allow the players to have any. It must have been inspiring to see the whole band, with no sheets of paper, and no music-racks, their eyes on their leader, playing away for their lives. Arthur Nikisch was my idol from the first day. His striking personality hypnotised not only the players but the audience; I remember his coming once to Munich, and conducting the opera *Meistersinger*; the orchestra rose to vertiginous heights. Another great conductor is Weingartner; one of the events of my life was a May evening in Paris, in 1912, when he conducted the French Orchestra Colonne in the Ninth Symphony. In America to-day we have a leader of genius in Leopold Stokowski, who,

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backed by the enthusiastic support of citizens, has made the Philadelphia Orchestra the best in our country.

Since I mentioned the Ignoble Prize in the November number, candidates have been suggested to me from all over the country. There are evidently many brave men and women in our land. Eventually I may be hoisted by my own petard. The *Mona Lisa*, which is one of my favourite works of art, has been submitted by three different persons, who apparently believe her to be no better than a vampire; but the unkindest cut of all was *Treasure Island*, which I think is the best novel Stevenson ever wrote, and one of the romantic masterpieces of all literature. I make no complaint—this kind of thing is just what I expected, and I am sure I cannot possibly be shocked more than my own list shocked others. In *The Outlook* for November 15 there is a delightful leading article by Lawrence Abbott, in which he states that he has never been able to read Dante. “There are lines and metaphors and similes and detached ideas to which Dante has given expression that are, of course, beautiful and appealing. But as for taking a volume of Dante’s poems down from the shelf for unconscious and spontaneous refreshment and beauty, as one takes down Calverley’s *Theocritus*, or Keats, or Browning, or Montaigne, or James Howell’s *Letters*, or three or four of the sonnets of Shake-

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speare, or three or four of the Psalms ascribed to David, or even the intricate but somewhat mysteriously appealing verses of Emily Dickinson—he simply cannot do it.”

Well, the consensus of critical opinion calls Dante one of the four leading poets of the world, the other three being Homer, Shakespeare, Goethe. And yet, I am so far in agreement with Mr. Abbott that, with the exception of *Hell*, I practically never read Dante. I am bored by *Purgatory*, and I find *Paradise* insufferably dull. I wonder how many general readers, when they think of Dante, think only of *Hell*. Every one to his taste. In my own mental life, Goethe has meant a thousand times more to me than Dante. Perhaps because I read him oftener. Had I studied Dante as I have studied Goethe, I might be a Dante enthusiast.

Mr. Abbott has guessed my object in founding the Ignoble Prize when he says: “It is designed to develop truthfulness.” Precisely so; and if in some minds it should develop cleverness at the expense of truth, I cannot help that. The spiritual climate of the twentieth century is unfavourable enough, anyhow; it cannot be made much worse by a little cleverness; whereas falsehood and hypocrisy will make it impossible for any one ever to become a critic, or indeed to become anything.

With reference to my remarks on the universal interest in sport, the president of one of our

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high-class universities writes me as follows: "Your Doctor of Divinity who read the sporting page before he read the war news would think charitably of a Doctor of Divinity (most reverend and lovable) by whose side I sat in his great city church on a recent Sunday morning. As the organ boomed over our heads the dear man inclined toward me and whispered some words. What words of like dignity with the organ prelude the congregation imagined him to be saying, I do not know. What he did say was: 'How did your team come out yesterday?'"

I am glad that among the unofficial ambassadors from Europe "we have with us" Hugh Walpole. He came in October and will stay until June. Many British novelists come to be seen rather than heard; but Mr. Walpole is an interesting and accomplished public speaker, and would be well worth hearing if he had never published a line. His talks are frank, urbane, intimate; and although I am far from being in agreement with many of his critical opinions, I keenly enjoy hearing him express them. The appearance of his latest novel synchronised with his own, and *The Cathedral* is by all odds his best book. Up to this time I preferred *The Green Mirror* to his other writings; but he has now surpassed that. In *The Cathedral* we have a real story with real characters; the tragic fate of the archdeacon is not caused by bad luck or by a series of accidents, as is so

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often the case even in so accomplished a master as Thomas Hardy, but is inherent in his own character. He was essentially a good man, but exactly the kind of man who is doomed. Canon Ronder is a subtle politician, presented with extraordinary skill; in fact, the only person in the book who seems to be not wholly realised by the author is the archdeacon's son, Falk. He is described in advance as a kind of Siegfried, but he seems to me both tame and pale. I like the story immensely; yet I cannot share the novelist's view that the cathedral itself is sinister; to me there is no building at once so beautiful and so *friendly* as a cathedral.

I am glad that the publishers are issuing a uniform edition of Mr. Walpole's novels; the earliest one, *The Prelude to Adventure*, gives an excellent picture of Cambridge University. Nothing is more difficult, apparently, than to write a convincing story of college life; no one has ever fully succeeded in the attempt. (There is only one novel of school life that is completely successful—*Tom Brown at Rugby*.) The first half of *Tom Brown at Oxford* is very fine (I always had a certain admiration for Drysdale). Among contemporary books, good stories of life at Cambridge are Archibald Marshall's *Peter Binney* and E. F. Benson's *The Babe, B. A.*, and for Oxford perhaps the best is Compton Mackenzie's *Sinister Street*. It is a curious thing that so many modern English novels of school life represent the particular school in

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question as a sink of iniquity and a place of torture—if a man thinks of his old school that way, he was perhaps as popular there as he deserved to be.

More and more frequently American students are going to England for graduate studies; and those who can afford to pay their way are beginning to prefer Cambridge to Oxford. Their reason is a good one. What with the Rhodes scholars, and the multitude of other foreigners, Oxford is now somewhat international in atmosphere; and as one of the chief reasons for going abroad is to leave all home associations, it is better to go where you can keep away from your fellow countrymen. Cambridge is the most English spot on earth; in customs and traditions it is more conservative than Oxford, another reason for going thither.

What a curious literary accident it is that Cambridge should have had nearly all the English poets! Theoretically, it ought not to have been so, for in times past Oxford has emphasised the classics, and Cambridge mathematics. Yet in the whole course of English history Oxford never had but one first-rate English poet, Shelley, and she expelled him, in order to keep the record clear; whereas Cambridge has Spenser, Marlowe, Milton, Herrick, Dryden, Gray, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Tennyson.

Burton J. Hendrick's *Life of Walter H. Page* is a notable biography, and one of the outstand-

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ing books of 1922. Mr. Hendrick is a Yale graduate, and in his senior year was one of the editors of the *Yale Literary Magazine*, founded in 1836 by William M. Evarts. He is a competent biographer, and has performed his task in a workmanlike manner, keeping himself in the background, and turning the light on his hero. In a certain sense, this is a biographical history in the traditional manner, for Page is the hero, and Mr. Hendrick writes in hearty admiration. The old method was to select a man because he was worth writing about, and to prove that fact; the ultra-modern method is not to select a hero but a victim; and to score off him as often as possible. Thus many contemporary biographies are really autobiographies, where we are invited to admire the living author's gifts for sensational anecdote and ironical wit. Mr. Hendrick's method is scrupulously objective.

It is interesting to see how Page grew away from and overcame his early prejudices. He was born and brought up in the South, and when he was studying later at Johns Hopkins, under the incomparable Gildersleeve, he had not shaken off anything. For the first time he met a student from the North, and wrote: "He is that rare thing, a Yankee Christian gentleman." He hated one of the faculty and wrote that he was "a native of Connecticut, and Connecticut, I suppose, is capable of producing any unholy human phenomenon." He met an attractive

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foreign girl, which led him to the following meditation: "The little creature might be taken for a Southern girl, but never for a Yankee. She has an easy manner and even an air of gentility about her that doesn't appear north of Mason and Dixon's line." Mr. Hendrick justly remarks: "This sort of thing is especially entertaining in the youthful Page, for it is precisely against this kind of complacency that, as a mature man, he directed his choicest ridicule." Personally I find these early years more interesting than the later ones; but I suppose nine out of ten readers will be chiefly attracted to the chapters dealing with Page's career as ambassador to England, from 1913 till his death. He was an excellent ambassador, but I do not think he should necessarily be praised for wisdom and foresight in his eagerness to have America enter the war. Living as he did in England, meeting daily leading statesmen and society personages, he could hardly have felt otherwise. He was in a most uncomfortable position, and behaved extremely well; but I have little sympathy with his attitude toward President Wilson, natural as it was. England, of course, wished America to enter the war at once; but it was the manifest duty of the President of the United States not to do what other nations wanted him to do, but to do what seemed to him best for the country whose executive he was. A statesman is a doctor, his country the patient; it is his duty to keep the patient alive as long as possible, and

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in good condition. I care as little for selfish hatred as I do for hypocritical friendship.

The two autobiographies by Augustus Thomas and John Drew, which appeared simultaneously, will be widely read and appreciated. Mr. Thomas is an engineer, a philosopher, a public speaker, a humorist, an athlete, a cartoonist, a theologian, an executive business man, an actor, a playwright. It is essential that he should write a sequel to this volume, for the simple reason that his eminence comes chiefly from his original dramas; and there is not enough in these entertaining pages to satisfy public curiosity. One feels after reading this book that whatever fame and emolument Mr. Thomas now enjoys, he richly deserves. I wonder how many men, even with the requisite ability, would be willing to endure the physical hardships and deferred hopes that were his daily fare for many years? We have here the life-story of an American who went forward simply because moving in any other direction never occurred to him; his natural gifts and good family inheritance were reinforced by indomitable energy, by a power of will that grew by what it fed on. The book is a soliloquy rather than a literary composition. It was dictated, this method producing exactly the opposite result to that observable in the case of Henry James. It was only after he began dictating that the novelist's style became hopelessly involved and "ultra-

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literary," whereas Mr. Thomas is unashamedly colloquial.

His dramatic masterpiece, *The Witching Hour*, was a natural product of his interest in the occult; and the pages dealing with that marvellous person, Washington Irving Bishop, who, like D. D. Home, did many things that have never been explained, are full of challenge. I was particularly impressed by Bishop's finding a word that Mr. Thomas had selected in a book; for precisely the same thing happened to me, and I have no solution and no theory. I was sitting in a hotel in Mentone, watching with sceptical amusement the tricks of a pair of travelling adventurers, when suddenly the gipsy-looking man turned to me and informed the audience that if I would select a word in a big book I was holding, his wife would find it immediately. She was on the other side of the room. I opened the book slightly, so that no one could see the page, I placed my finger on a very common word, and closed the volume. The man made passes at his wife; she advanced across the room, like a somnambulist, took the book from my hands, turned instantly to the page, and placed her finger on the right word. I haven't got over it yet.

Praise should be given the publishers for making *The Print of My Remembrance* such a *light* book. It is a fat volume, and has nearly five hundred pages; but it is delightfully easy to hold in the hand. Twenty years ago I started

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a campaign for light books. At that time I could always tell whether or not a book was printed in America, merely by "hefting" it. English books were always light, and ours the reverse. To-day the majority of good books in America are easy to hold; the ideal is dull paper, black type, and light weight. There is no longer any excuse for the old monstrosity of shiny, eye-killing paper, thin type, and weight so ponderous that to read the book becomes a gymnastic, rather than a literary, exercise.

Speaking of books printed in America, it is much better to have that legend shown on the reverse of the title-page than at the end of the volume, where it so often makes an anti-climax. A novel's last page will sometimes read like this: "She pressed her lips to his. Printed in the United States of America."

John Drew's *My Years on the Stage* is charming, because John Drew wrote it; how could it be otherwise? He is a gentleman by nature, breeding, and training, also by personal preference. With his infallible good taste he chose an ideal mother. Never shall I forget the last time I saw her on the stage. It was in New Haven, on the night of 8 May 1896. An all-star cast was performing in *The Rivals*—Jefferson, Goodwin, Wilson, Crane, Julia Marlowe, and others. Mrs. Drew was seventy-seven years old, and never acted better. In a rôle so easy to overdo, she was perfection. Not con-

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tent with ordinary applause, the students in the audience burst into wild cheering. The dear old lady came before the curtain, and threw a kiss like a queen.

Booth Tarkington, in his entertaining preface, speaks of his delight in the Daly performances when he was a boy at Exeter; at the same moment I was an undergraduate at Yale, and his graceful tribute beautifully expresses my own feelings. Those were great nights at Daly's, with Mr. Drew, Miss Rehan, Mrs. Gilbert, Mr. Lewis, Mr. LeMoyne, and the rest. We live them over again in this book. (Here I learn for the first time the origin of the name Ada Rehan.) The reason why John Drew always got along so well with Mr. Daly, Miss Rehan, Miss Adams, Mr. Charles Frohman, and with every one else, is never mentioned, but how plain it is!

The theatrical season of 1922-1923 has been notable for the number and excellence of Shakespearean performances. Walter Hampden, one of the most gifted of American actors, is appearing in *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *Merchant of Venice*; incidentally I pay homage to him for reviving that wonderful old comedy of Massinger's, *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*. As I write these lines David Warfield is rehearsing for Shylock, Ethel Barrymore and Jane Cowl the rôle of Juliet, and John Barrymore has just electrified New York with his interpretation of

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Hamlet. This performance, under the direction of Arthur Hopkins, and with the scenery designed by Robert Edmond Jones, is magnificently successful. It takes three hours and twenty minutes, and there is literally not one dull moment. Mr. Barrymore is excellent from beginning to end, and in the last scene best of all. The play is beautifully mounted, and leaves the mind of the spectator full of pictures. I think, though, that the Ghost ought to appear in the early scenes, for Horatio gives a detailed account of the apparition to Hamlet. A column of light, with a voice coming off stage, is not effective. I suppose there never was a greater Ghost in *Hamlet* than Lawrence Barrett; I saw him when he was acting with Edwin Booth; and I have never heard the lines spoken so impressively. It is interesting to observe to-day that our most popular actors and actresses, who could fill a house with any modern play, deliberately prefer Shakespeare; and as I was following the scenes of *Hamlet* last week, I could not help thinking once more that Shakespeare's supremacy in poetry is no more evident than his supremacy as a playwright. No one apparently ever so well understood the theatre.

An interesting new book is *Whittier's Unknown Romance*, giving for the first time his letters to Elizabeth Lloyd. His kindness and boundless charity are all the more remarkable when we remember that he was a lifelong sufferer from

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two ailments that would have soured the average man—dyspepsia and insomnia. This is an important work, but the editor seems to think it is Whittier's only love-story. I happened to discover years ago that he was in love with Cornelia Russ, of Hartford, and the letter in which he asked her to marry him I published in the *Century Magazine*, for May 1902. Mr. Pickard immediately declared it to be a forgery, but when I showed him the original, he admitted its genuineness. Then T. W. Higginson, in his *Life of Whittier*, cited Pickard as proof that my letter was false, and, on my requesting him to have the statement corrected, declined to do so, on the ground that it would cost too much to change the plates. Whittier, like most men, was a sentimentalist, and fell deeply in love several times. And any one who doubts the sincerity of his passion has only to read his letter to Miss Russ.

I see that many are now engaged in drawing up lists of the greatest living men. A list of the first ten in America was widely circulated last summer. Arnold Bennett has recently prepared a Big Six for England, which contains the names of Wells, Shaw, Hardy, Asquith, and two dark horses. If I had under oath to name the greatest living American in 1923, he would be John Singer Sargent.

VII

JAMES FORD RHODES, our most eminent living historian of the United States, has in his latest volume dealt with the administrations of McKinley and Roosevelt. His opinions are his own, and expressed in no uncertain terms; but they stand on documentary evidence, well shod with foot-notes. The value and general interest of this book are considerably augmented by the fact that Mr. Rhodes was personally acquainted with nearly every public man during the years 1896-1909; many of the sources of information are in his own memory. The work is as remarkable as Clarendon's *History of the Great Rebellion* for the number and vividness of the portraits; Roosevelt, Taft, Hanna, McKinley, Hay are clearly and sharply presented. It is almost impossible to lay the book down until one has finished it. Roosevelt is the hero, and evidently made a tremendous impression on the historian, who believes as fully in his essential goodness as in his greatness. And there can be no doubt of either after one has studied his inner life and his public career. Yet Mr. Rhodes gives the facts about the Panama Revolution with scrupulous accuracy and in a manner that shows his non-concurrence with Roosevelt's policy in that incident.

His fairness of mind is shown particularly in

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his portrait of Mark Hanna, who plays a leading rôle in these pages. When the very worst that Hanna's enemies can say against him is said and given due attention, the fact remains that his death was a severe loss to the country and to the world. For he was one of the few individuals who knew how to deal with both labour and capital—trusted in and admired by conservatives and radicals, and therefore better qualified to deal with acute situations than any one now living. Indeed he left no successor.

The charm of McKinley is impressively portrayed. He was a far abler man than most Americans believed him to be when he was nominated in 1896, and in these chapters he receives praise. It was his peculiar misfortune that a war should have broken out during his administration, for he was a man of peace. He did *nearly* all that was possible to prevent this war, even against great opposition, but it is clear that Mr. Rhodes thinks he could have prevented it and that the war was unnecessary. The behaviour of our soldiers and sailors in battle, and the unselfishness of the United States in keeping her word to Cuba, are, however, highly commended by our historian.

Mr. Taft's immense skill in diplomacy and his devotion to duty receive a highly merited tribute; I am now awaiting the next volume, to see what Mr. Rhodes will say about Taft and about Roosevelt from 1909 to 1919. He has abundant knowledge of facts, a restrained but neverthe-

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less ardent admiration for everything honourable and noble, and a judicial mind. I believe his opinions on public men and events to be more weighty than those of any other living American, even though I am frankly surprised at his statement that, if Roosevelt had been in the Presidential chair, the Great War could have been and would have been prevented. This remark does not convince me.

Every one takes a just pride in the courage of American soldiers and sailors as displayed in the seven wars in which the United States has been engaged since 1776; but courage is a quality our men share with practically all other races and nations. What I delight in is any evidence of courtesy and chivalry shown by American troops during and after battle. Not long ago, I met a sergeant who told me that he had been in the army of occupation in Germany and that, when the time came for our troops to withdraw, the German women and children showered presents and tokens upon them, and wept unrestrainedly in saying farewell. The brave and honest sergeant told me he was prouder of that fact than of helping to win the war; and I felt that such a man could be trusted to uphold the honour of America anywhere and at any time.

I see that a California judge has decided that the Authorised Version of the Bible must not be used in any public school in that State, on the ground that it is sectarian. Far be it from

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me to criticise the courts, but I may be pardoned for regretting that the finest work ever written in the English language—which means the best book in the world—should be forbidden to school children, while so many books that are poisonous in content and vulgar in style circulate freely. When we have Cardinal Gibbons's emphatic testimony that the Bible remains the one means of culture, and that Daniel Webster was a model for other American statesmen in his intimate familiarity with it, we may—without of course criticising—believe that some judges are better judges of almost anything than literature. Whatever other English books are studied in the public schools, we can be certain that they will be inferior to the Bible; it is interesting that the inferior ones should be forced on American children, and the best prohibited. Synchronously with the California decision, the State of Oregon voted that all children without exception must attend the public schools, thus striking a blow at schools where the instruction is founded on the Christian religion. Perhaps the next move will be to prohibit religious instruction in the home, and any one caught saying grace at meals will be sent to prison for twenty years.

I am constantly asked: "What are the best books for children?" The best books for children are those that were not primarily intended for children. The Bible, Shakespeare, *Pilgrim's*

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Progress, Gulliver's Travels, Robinson Crusoe, and the old-fashioned editions of the *Arabian Nights*. And in the vast welter of modern books that are carefully prepared for the infant mind, I think those are the best which can be enjoyed most by the mature mind—as *Alice in Wonderland*, the Doctor Dolittle stories, and the *Memoirs of a London Doll*.

The most agreeable place to read any book is on the train. One is comparatively safe from interruption, one cannot be annoyed by the telephone, one almost always has a good light both by day and by night. Two suggestions will be found practical: in general, sit on the right side of the train; then you will usually have no track outside your window. On the left side freight-trains, running in the same direction, keep intervening between you and the light, and it usually seems as if every freight-train were at least four miles long; when your railway car has finally passed it, and you hear the maddened snort of the freight locomotive, maddened because you have escaped, your own train then stops at a station just long enough to permit the entire freight-train to pass, when once more you begin the tedious process of overhauling it. Therefore, sit on the right side of the train. Secondly, ride backward, if you can. It is easier on the eyes. In this attitude, the trees, posts, and landscape fade gently and gracefully away, whereas sitting forward, they

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rush furiously and directly into your defenceless face.

One of the finest things about G. K. Chesterton is that he has never lost what Browning called the "faculty of wonder." It will not be remembered that, in *Pippa Passes*, the student Schramm declared that although the object that first roused our enthusiasm may do so no longer, the enthusiasm does not die: "The faculty of wonder may be old and tired enough with respect to its first object, and yet young and fresh sufficiently so far as concerns its novel one." Mr. Chesterton will never outgrow his zest for life, which is one reason why he is such a wise man. In his most recent volume of poetry, *Saint Barbara*, occurs the following stanza:

When all my days are ending
And I have no song to sing,
I think I shall not be too old
To stare at everything;
As I stared once at a nursery door
Or a tall tree and a swing.

Every man, woman, and child should visit the Hippodrome in New York at least once every year. To borrow from Barnum, this is undoubtedly "the greatest show on earth." Things are done on that vast stage by men, women, and animals which are so astounding that one becomes accustomed to the impossible. And there

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is such a gorgeous display of colours and organised glory that, if the Queen of Sheba could see it, she would forget Solomon. I regard Charles Dillingham as a public benefactor of the first magnitude—he communicates to this prodigious undertaking his own enormous energy and enthusiasm. I remember him when we were both schoolboys in Hartford. In football he was a ubiquitous nuisance to his opponents, and in “shinny on the ice” at “Sharp’s” he was as elusive as a flea. I recollect, when we were skating there one happy day, his saying with immense gusto: “I’d rather play games than eat.” I have never seen him since, but I am sure he has not outgrown the early zest, and somehow, through all the vast and complicated variety of the Hippodrome spectacle, I feel his spirit. There is revealed an organising mind worthy of Napoleon, with the heart of a boy.

Mr. George Simpson Eddy, of New York, has made a valuable discovery, and embodied the results of it in a beautifully printed little volume, called *A Project of Universal and Perpetual Peace*, written by Pierre-André Gargaz a former Galley-Slave, and printed by Benjamin Franklin at Passy in the year 1782. It seems that Gargaz, a schoolmaster, was unjustly accused of murder, and sentenced by a French court in 1761 to twenty years in the galleys at hard labour. He served the full term, and instead of becoming debased, broken, or embittered

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by this horrible experience, he spent his time thinking of ways in which the conditions of human life on the earth might be improved. He wrote out a detailed project for assuring the peace of the world, and, having no money, and being in disgrace as a felon, he applied to Franklin, as the most enlightened of all living men (which Franklin certainly was), to print it for him. To the eternal honour of the great American, he acceded to this request. Mr. Eddy has found the publication and now gives it to readers in both French and English, with accompanying notes and explanations, and in a volume that is a model of the printer's art. Gargaz's scheme has many excellent practical features, and he answers a large number of definite objections. One of these is "War is of use to make money circulate." To this Gargaz makes detailed suggestions showing how much better it may be made to circulate for constructive work in time of peace. Perhaps the one most interesting to read nowadays is the following: "There is the isthmus of Panama in America, and that of Suez between Asia and Africa; these two isthmuses prevent the junction of four Seas and are the reason that, to go around the World by water, requires about three years and exposes one to stormy and overy often icy Seas, and uninhabited Coasts. Each of these two isthmuses must be cut from one Sea to the other by a canal about sixty feet wide, thirty feet deep and about forty leagues long; by means of these

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two canals one will make the tour of the terrestrial Globe, by water, in about ten months, and upon Seas that are always good for Navigation, and very convenient for the establishment upon all the Coasts thereof of new and very beneficial trade between many Nations."

Pretty good for a galley-slave; pretty good for anybody. It is an interesting reflexion that an eighteenth-century jail-bird should be so far in advance of the world's civilisation of the year of our Lord 1923.

A. E. Housman's *Last Poems* have appeared, and, while they are not quite equal to the best of the lyrics in *A Shropshire Lad*, they unquestionably constitute the best volume of original English verse of the year 1922. The philosophy underlying them is precisely the same as that of the former book, which appeared in 1896—bleak pessimism and unashamed paganism. It is curious to see an Englishman, professor at Cambridge, so completely aloof from everything British and everything Christian. He is not rebellious or radical—he is simply untouched by prevailing currents of thought. They do not affect him even negatively. He gives the impression of a mind quite independent and quite self-contained, expressing itself in its own individual way. The poems are exceedingly beautiful and original, completely thought out and severely intellectual, so that we might justly say of them what Carlyle wrote of Emerson's

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verses: "You do not fall on me like radiant summer rainbows, like floods of sunlight, but with thin piercing radiances which affect me like the light of the *stars*."

Charles Rumford Walker's book, *Steel*, is interesting because of its frank truthfulness and absence of partisan feeling. Mr. Walker was graduated from Yale in 1916; during his college course he was primarily interested in literature and philosophy. He wrote poems, stories, literary essays, and had an active mind, which shone to advantage in serious conversation. He enlisted in the war, became a captain, and then entered the steel industry as an unskilled labourer, to see for himself exactly what it was like. This book is the result. It is rather surprising that his physique—for he was not athletic—was able to endure the fearful strain placed upon it. I think his will-power and intellectual curiosity carried him through. I regard this volume as a valuable contribution to economics and sociology. The author's style is vivid and colloquial, so that the narrative is continuously interesting, and there is no trace of hysteria nor even of exaggeration; he lets the facts speak for themselves. They do.

Mr. Walker is one more illustration of how a liberal education fits a man's mind for almost any calling or emergency; he took no studies in college that directly prepared him either for a captain's commission or for labour in steel; but

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he was able to turn his mind to these subjects with more efficiency than if he had been vocationally trained. It is particularly pleasant to see how easily and agreeably he got along with other men—both in the camp and in the fiery furnace.

All those who are interested in the Russian drama and in the Russian theatre should read Oliver M. Sayler's new book on the subject, called *The Russian Theatre*. It is copiously illustrated in colours, and the illustrations add greatly to the practical value of the work. He gives a complete description of the Moscow Art Theatre, and an account of the plays in which the company have made their reputation; the last two chapters, *The Russian Theatre in America*, and *The Spirit of the Russian Theatre*, will be especially interesting to American readers. It is an authoritative and stimulating book. I am rather sorry that he has gone back to former methods of spelling Russian names in English, when we now have the Congressional Library scheme of uniform transliteration. There is actually no more sense in spelling *Chekhov* and *Chaikovski* with an initial *T* than there is in talking about King *Tcharles the First*, on his way to *tchurch*. That "T" got in there because the sound of "ch" in these words does not exist in either French or German, and there were many translations from the Russian in these languages before English ones became well known. But be-

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cause the French and German languages are unfortunate enough to be without these sounds is no reason why the English, richer in this respect, should follow their poorer neighbours. The Germans are obliged to spell *Chekhov* as *Tschechow*. The musical critic of the *New York World* has the courage to write *Chaikowski*, and he will eventually be followed by others. I am glad that Mr. Saylor writes *Shaliapin* instead of the French *Chaliapine*. How strange it is that this great singer's first invasion of our country was so disastrous! Now he comes in triumph, like the world conqueror he is.

December 10, 1922, was the one hundredth birthday of César Franck. It was not so universally observed as it should have been; but at Yale University, a little club of undergraduates, known as The Pundits, arranged for a public commemoration worthy of the occasion. Before an audience which filled every available space in the hall there were played by expert performers the *Prélude*, *Chorale*, and *Fugue*, and the great *Sonata* for piano and violin. One reason why César Franck's immense fame was posthumous is, perhaps, because his finest works were written during the last ten years of his life. He was one of the few men who managed to combine prolonged and daily devotion to the routine of teaching with original composition. He was a hard worker. He rose every day, winter and summer, shortly after five, and spent

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the time before seven in composition; he then taught ten hours daily, going all over Paris to find his pupils; and in spite of his continuous toil, he devoted one hour to meditation, often on religion, for he was an ardent believer. The fact that many of his contemporaries, like Gounod, received universal applause, never made him sour and never made him change his methods or ideals. What little attention his own work attracted was mainly derogatory or scornful. The performance of his marvellous symphony aroused bitter opposition, and at its conclusion Gounod was surrounded by a group of his idolaters, to whom he expressed his contempt for the work. When Franck died in 1890, only two or three of his faithful pupils followed him to his obscure grave in Mont-Rouge; but a few years later, the body was exhumed and carried in triumph to the Montparnasse Cemetery, where an elaborate monument was erected over it, and a statue was placed before the church where he had been organist for forty years. Apart from the invaluable Grove's *Dictionary of Music*, which every music-lover should own, the best and most complete account of César Franck is the official biography by the distinguished composer, Vincent d'Indy, which has been translated into English. It will be remembered that last year D'Indy visited the United States, and conducted with various orchestras some of his own compositions. In reading any detailed account of the life and career of Franck, one

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hardly knows which to admire most, the genius of the musician or the simplicity, sincerity, and charm of the man. Fortunately his works have now received the kind of fame that has the signs of immortality.

The distinguished novelist and dramatist, St. John Ervine, has recently published an entertaining and vivacious book, called *Some Impressions of My Elders*. These papers were originally printed in the *North American Review*, and the volume is dedicated gratefully to the accomplished Elisabeth Cutting, although Mr. Ervine misspells her name. The "elders" selected for treatment are A. E. (the greatest personality in Ireland and the most universally respected), Arnold Bennett, G. K. Chesterton, John Galsworthy, George Moore, Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, W. B. Yeats. Any one interested in contemporary thought, literature, and art will find this book delightfully entertaining, as it is written in a frankly confessional style. Ervine is an Irishman on both sides for three hundred years, and hence feels free to give his countrymen a few home thrusts, which have a righteous anger as their impelling force. Apparently he does not believe that the best way to make a moral advance is to shout in solitude "Every day in every way I am growing better and better," but rather to realise as definitely as possible one's ignorance, selfishness, hypocrisy, and meanness, so that this mortifying knowledge

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may sting one into a determination to improve, for we need improvement more than complacency.

I wonder what Jonathan Edwards, Cotton Mather, Oliver Cromwell, John Milton, and other hearts of oak would have thought of the back-patting gospel? These men were free from the taint of self-pity. They did not have to jack themselves up with signs on the wall imploring them to work or commanding them to smile, nor did they bellow their courage in the bathroom. They rather said: "God be merciful to me a sinner." I believe that an acute consciousness of sin is more needed just now than an enormous accession of conceit. The old theologians, with all their dogmatism, got down to the bed-rock of human nature; they believed in the reality of sin, and they did their utmost to convict their audiences; some hearers left the church realising their shortcomings, and determined by the grace of God that something must be done to improve the situation. And even now I believe that religious faith will elevate the average man more effectively than he can do it by talking encouragingly to himself. The latter method has all the disadvantage of trying to lift oneself by tugging at one's boot-straps.

I have no intention and no desire to attack specifically M. Coué and his work, for I am incompetent to do so, never having read his book. I have no doubt that he has wrought many cures by hypnotic suggestion or by the pervasive force

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of his personality, or by some means; and those who have been cured are naturally believers in him. He has cured certain persons and strengthened others; the same may be said of Christian Science. Furthermore, every one seems to testify to the healer's nobility of character and benevolent disposition; so that he must be counted emphatically among good men. It is the popular understanding or misunderstanding or debased caricature of Couéism which has the widest currency and of which I am sceptical; as commonly stated, the system appears either to be the wrong remedy for the disease, or the wrong diagnosis. The majority of persons do not need more conceit. They seem to be dissatisfied with everybody and everything except themselves.

I went into a restaurant once and saw a sign on the wall which said: "Smile, damn you, smile!" but it did not make me feel particularly hilarious.

My friend Ervine might not agree with me as to the efficacy of religious faith, but I was led into these remarks by my agreement with him that progress lies through the sense of unworthiness rather than through self-satisfaction. It would seem to me that in the famous parable of the Pharisee and the publican, we might observe the results respectively of the religion of self-encouragement and that of self-abasement.

And what applies to individuals applies with even more emphasis to nations. If each nation

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would cease just for five minutes regarding itself as the greatest, wisest, and noblest collection of men on earth, some general advance might be made. It would be a good thing at the next meeting of international representatives, instead of seeing how much each delegate could snatch for his country, if they would all get on their knees and ask God to forgive them for existing.

I suppose one reason why self-flattery is so popular is because nearly everybody seems to be afraid of life. The fear of life is the commonest disease of the twentieth century; and no wonder. If a man has no belief in God, no hope for a future life, and no confidence in the significance of the universe, I can hardly blame him for living in a state of chronic fear. It is perhaps natural that he should try to balance his self-pity with self-assurance.

I am, of course, aware how very old-fashioned my meditations and my remedies must seem, for I have nothing better to offer than the Christian religion, which, by those who know nothing about it, is described as a collection of worn-out dogmas. Still, many of those who would displace it have something even older and more primitive to suggest—human instinct. That history seems to prove the inadequacy of human instinct as a guide to individual and collective living does not trouble them, for they do not read history.

Mr. Ervine is most severe on the mass of his

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fellow countrymen, both Ulsterites and Sinn Feiners; but to his "Elders" he pays the debt of gratitude. I do not think he is just to Mr. Galsworthy, who is not dogmatic enough and not pugnacious enough to please his critic; but while his estimate of Mr. Galsworthy's intellectual qualities is too low, I am in hearty accord with everything that Mr. Ervine says against that futile play, *The Fugitive*. The heroes of his book are Mr. Wells and Mr. Shaw; and the following paragraph about the former gives one a taste of the wit and penetration displayed by his admirer. "If a writer wished to create a character who would most aptly personify the past thirty years of English or of world history, he would have to create a character very like Mr. Wells; a questioning, variable, demanding person, with some impatience and testiness of temper, with, at times, a fantastic and wayward manner, but always superimposed on these superficialities, an eager and unthwartable desire for a true belief. Mr. Chesterton said of him once that 'you lie awake at night and hear him grow,' and fundamentally that is true, in spite of the temptation one has at times to believe that one lies awake at night and merely hears him changing his mind."

Now there can be no doubt that Mr. Wells has a larger number of opinions than Mr. Galsworthy; that he is also more eager to fight for them; that he also has benevolent intentions. But if human beings had to choose a world dic-

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tator with absolute power, and the choice lay between Wells and Galsworthy, what then? I fear that if it were settled by universal suffrage, Wells would be elected; for I cannot imagine a worse campaigner than Galsworthy. But which is the wiser man? I believe that Wells is a man of genius, bewilderingly versatile, sometimes so versatile that it seems as if the only quality he lacked were wisdom.

One of the most important of recent publications is *The Correspondence of James Fenimore Cooper*, edited by his grandson, James Fenimore Cooper, and dedicated to Professor Beers, who helped in its preparation. The personality of the famous novelist is clearly displayed in these letters. The most interesting are those written during his seven years' residence in Europe. Here is a characteristic remark concerning a frequent source of irritation: "If there is a term that gives me more disgust than any other, it is to be called, as some on the continent *advertise me*, the 'American Walter Scott.' It is offensive to a gentleman to be nicknamed at all, and there is a pretension in the title, which offends me more than all the abusive reviews that ever were written."

The choice of Augustus Thomas as executive chairman of the Producing Managers' Association was justified in many ways and more especially in two: his long experience in every

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department of the American theatre and his complete freedom from fads. He is an idealist and a man of the world. He does not serve God and Mammon. He serves God, and makes Mammon serve *him*. Besides leading an attack on the ticket speculators in New York, he has organised The American National Theatre, a nation-wide movement with the ultimate object of giving every locality in the United States an opportunity to hear both Shakespeare and the best contemporary plays. He will have to fight everywhere the timid, the inert, and the sceptical; the moment any good movement is started, it is greeted with a chorus of "It can't be done." And already the sneerers are releasing their venom. Fortunately Mr. Thomas loves a fight, and is formidable.

The one thing most intolerably wrong with the American theatre is that it is confined to New York. The new movement is mainly an attempt to give the American theatre to the American people.

VIII

After all, there is no opera like Lohengrin.

I taught English at Harvard one year, and at Yale thirty-one, an equitable division of my time between the two universities. My year at Harvard was 1891-1892, and my instruction was confined to English composition. There is no doubt that I learned more than I taught. I had one division of freshmen, one of sophomores, and one hundred and twenty picked seniors and juniors. Coming from Yale, I had previously spent only one year at Harvard, and that chiefly in monastic seclusion, being engaged upon a doctor's thesis; so that this invitation to teach gave me my first opportunity to become acquainted with Harvard undergraduates. I cannot remember much about the freshmen, the Class of 1895; but I remember awarding to my sophomore pupils only two As, the recipients being Lindsay Todd Damon, who is now professor of English in Brown University, and Edwin Francis Edgett, who is now literary editor of the Boston *Transcript*.

For many years Barrett Wendell had given a course in daily themes, open to juniors and seniors. Every student who had the temerity to elect it was compelled to write a long composition every other week, and a short one every day. Mr. Wendell read the biweeklies, and I read the dailies. This meant that during

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the academic year I read every day the diary of one hundred and twenty representative Harvard upper-class men, which to a visitor from Yale was deeply interesting. Professor Briggs told me that I probably knew more about undergraduate life at both Yale and Harvard than any one else. If I did not, it was my fault. Among the pupils were William Vaughn Moody, Percy Atherton, Oswald Garrison Villard, John Corbin, and other later notables; also David Wells, who, in the short interval between his graduation and his death, made a brilliant reputation as a novelist. These senior and junior diarists were exceedingly frank, both in their themes and in "consultation hours." A fine lot of fellows they were, and courteous to the Yale barbarian.

During that winter Jean and Edouard de Reszké made their first appearance in Boston. Maurice Grau brought over the whole Metropolitan company from New York, and they sang in a big barn called Mechanics Hall. What singing! Never has there been an operatic troupe like that.

One Saturday afternoon I heard Adelina Patti stop in the middle of *Martha* and sing *Home, Sweet Home*. But on the same evening I heard the De Reszké brothers and Emma Eames in *Faust*, and I forgot all about Patti.

Lewis Gates, instructor in English, was one of the most brilliant and inspiring men on the Harvard faculty. He was a recluse, seeking no

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acquaintances, and sitting up all night in his room. But he was an enthusiast about good music, and this gave me a chance to draw him out, and become intimately acquainted with him, for which I have always been grateful. We used to go in to Boston together to hear the opera, and walk back to Cambridge over the Harvard Bridge at one o'clock in the morning, eagerly discussing the music and the performers. As the curtain fell on the departing figure of Lohengrin one evening, I heard Gates murmur, "There goes the ideal—it can never stay!"

The next afternoon I read among my themes one written either by a senior or a junior—I wish I were able to remember the man's name—which was a glowing appreciation of the opera I had just heard; and I have never forgotten the young critic's final sentence—*After all, there is no opera like Lohengrin*. If, by some miracle, he should see these lines, I should like to have him know that even if I have forgotten his name, I have not forgotten his theme.

After all, there is no opera like Lohengrin. Thirty years of listening have strengthened my conviction that the boy was right. It is my favourite opera, because it is the most dramatic and the most beautiful. I am quite aware that this is not the proper thing to say; *Lohengrin* belongs to Wagner's "earlier period," when he was "feeling his way to a method," and hence it ought not to be nearly so great music as *Tristan*, *Siegfried*, or *Meistersinger*. It is, though.

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To put *Lohengrin* at the head of all the operas in the world may be an indication that one's musical taste is untrained, unelevated; but I don't care what the vote indicates; I had rather hear *Lohengrin* than anything else. I am a shameless Wagnerite, an uncompromising worshipper; I never get too much of Wagner. I like to hear his works presented without any cuts; and in symphony concerts I particularly delight in a "Richard Wagner Abend." I enjoy the whole *Ring*; I enjoy *Tristan*; I enjoy *Meistersinger*; I enjoy *Der fliegende Holländer*; I enjoy *Parsifal*. I believe the operas of Wagner are superior to the operas of all other composers put together; but I also believe that the *Vorspiel* and first act of *Lohengrin* have never been equalled either by Wagner or any one else. *After all, there is no opera like Lohengrin.*

Probably no one in the next two or three centuries will witness so fine a performance of *Lohengrin* as we saw in the early nineties. Jean de Reszké as the Holy Knight, Edouard as the King, and Emma Eames as Elsa were just as inspiring to see as to hear—they were ideal representatives of ideal characters. Their intelligence was as subtle as their voices were glorious. *Lohengrin*, as they gave it, was a perfect materialisation: it left nothing to be desired. It pleased the ear, the eye, and the mind. If the angels in heaven sing oratorios as well as these artists sang operas, I shall be satisfied. To hear the ravishing and climactic music of Elsa's

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dream, to see the swan approaching, the noble dignity of Jean de Reszké's figure as he stepped ashore, to feel the ineffable beauty and tenderness of his Farewell to the Swan—these are imperishable memories. *After all, there is no opera like Lohengrin.*

The *Vorspiel* is an example of crescendo, beginning faintly and rising to a climax. Of course it cannot be translated into words; but one of the best verbal interpretations I have ever read occurs in George Moore's novel *Sister Teresa*, the sequel to *Evelyn Innes*. (I remember once asking Madame Nordica if she thought these two novels by George Moore contained any suggestions on music that were of value; and she replied emphatically that they were worthless, that the music-stuff in them was bogus and absurd. Later I asked Horatio Parker the same question, and he said that the musical suggestions were most valuable, even profound. The two authorities were alike only in the emphasis with which they uttered their irreconcilable opinions, by which we see that there is as much divergence in musical as in literary criticism.)

Evelyn Innes plays the *Vorspiel* to a nun in the convent and asks her for her idea of the music, to which the sister said, "It seemed to me as if I stood waiting on some mountain top, somewhere where there is no boundary. The dawn seemed to be breaking, light seemed to increase, the rays grew brighter, and my soul seemed to be waiting amid the increasing light."

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Greatly as I enjoy hearing the *Vorspiel* played at symphony concerts, it is always tantalising; for as the last notes die away, I long to see the curtains open, and reveal the King, Telramund, and the Herald in their familiar positions. Nothing in any other opera is so dramatic as the first act of *Lohengrin*. The defenceless figure of Elsa; the horrible accusation by Telramund; Elsa's dream; her unexpected consent to trial by combat; the challenge of the trumpets followed by absolute silence; Elsa's request for a second summons; again the trumpets, and the silence; Elsa on her knees in prayer; the thrilling promise of the violins; the apparition of the swan, bringing the knight in armour; the swelling excitement of the crowd; the consternation of Telramund and Ortrud; the entrance of Lohengrin; the fight; the triumph. It is a complete play in itself. *After all, there is no opera like Lohengrin.*

When the Knight appears, he is radiant with celestial glory; we know he is the divine ambassador—*der Gottgesandte*.

I am always reminded of two poems by Browning and Milton. In *Count Gismond*, we have a similar scene; the defenceless orphan girl publicly slandered by Gautier, and the unexpected appearance of her champion.

Till out strode Gismond; then I knew
That I was saved. I never met
His face before, but, at first view,

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I felt quite sure that God had set
Himself to Satan; who would spend
A minute's mistrust on the end?

And in *Comus*, we have the couplet, summing
up both poems and the opera:

Or, if virtue feeble were,
Heaven itself would stoop to her.

After all, there is no opera like Lohengrin.

The players of the Moscow Art Theatre made a profound impression in New York—both on the spectators and, as a normal school, on professional actors. I went to see *The Cherry Orchard*, by Chekhov. The play was first produced in 1904, by this same company in Moscow. The author, although in his last illness, attended the performance, and his wife played the same part she still adorns. This play has been repeatedly translated into English, but the honour of making the first English translation belongs to Max S. Mandell, M.A., instructor in Russian at Yale. His version was published in 1908 by the undergraduate editors of the *Yale Courant*. The most illuminating interpretation and criticism both of this drama and of Chekhov as a dramatist was written by the late George Calderon, a brilliant young Englishman who lost his life in the war. In his introduction to *Two Plays by Chekhov*, published in 1912, he makes Russian drama as clear as it can be made to

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English-speaking people. He points out the real difference between our theatre and theirs; our plays are *centripetal*, theirs *centrifugal*. That is, the English playwright endeavours to draw the attention of the spectators to a group of people on the stage; the Russian's idea is, that by looking at the *dramatis personæ* we shall be forced to consider life in general—universal humanity. This method accounts for the lack of plot, incidents, and coherence that so many Occidentals feel in reading a Russian play.

Chekhov must be seen to be appreciated. One who had formed an opinion of *The Cherry Orchard* merely by reading it, would be amazed at the revelation of the play's possibilities on the stage. There was fluent, even dramatic movement, and the close was inexpressibly affecting. I heard an American woman say, after the fall of the final curtain, "How strange it is that I should be crying at the performance of a drama not one word of which am I able to understand!" The secret of the success of the Moscow company lies in one word—team-play. They know what ought to be self-evident, that team-play in acting is as necessary as in football. There are just as good actors in other countries as in Russia, but it remained for the Moscow company to show what could be done by intelligent training and co-operative effort. The men and women seem to be living rather than acting.

The two all-important elements seem to be

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these: 1. A good play. 2. Good acting. With these two conditions, everything else is subordinate and secondary. I thought the scenery in *The Cherry Orchard* so inadequate that it seemed amateurish; it was certainly inferior to the average American production on Broadway; but one was so interested in the progress of the play and in the persons on the stage, that the cheap scenery was forgotten. But it was cheap.

How times have changed since Orlenev and Nazimova first came to America! They nearly starved. Americans had to be browbeaten to be induced to hear them. The same is true of the visit of Madame Komisarzhenskaia, who gave the best performance of Ibsen's *Doll's House* that I have ever seen—there were perhaps twenty-three persons in the audience. I thought of those pioneer expeditions last week at *The Cherry Orchard*—one of the largest theatres in New York (all orchestra seats \$5.50) jammed and packed to the last inch, hundreds standing up. I wonder what the weekly receipts would be in rubles—one would have to calculate them in logarithms or light-years. I dare say that the actors seem no more strange to us than America must seem to them. They come from a country where death by starvation has ceased to attract any attention; where epidemics and normalcy mean the same thing; where for years no one has seen any actual money.

New York may or may not be the largest city

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in the world. It is certainly the earth's musical and artistic metropolis. Simply stay on Manhattan Island, and you will see every person in the world most worth seeing. Authors, actors, composers, musicians, scientists, statesmen, physicians, prophets, and prize-fighters—they all come to New York. And the quality of hospitality is not strained.

Among new novels in English, the success of the season has been won by a young man's first book—*Futility*, by William Gerhardi. This author was born in Russia of English parents, and with a family name neither Russian nor British. Bilingual from childhood, he is a cosmopolitan. Just as an American who knows French can teach that language better to Americans than the average Frenchman, so Mr. Gerhardi interprets the Russian temperament better to Occidentals than was possible to a genius like Dostoevski. He knows the Russians; they were round about him in his infancy; but he sees them also with the eye of the Englishman. A sincere humorist, he loves them and laughs at them. Ever since Turgenev in his novel *Rudin* revealed to the world and to Russians themselves the national incapacity to do anything, the Russian fiction "hero" has run true to form. Sienkiewicz, in his psychological novel, *Without Dogma*, said the whole race was cursed with what he called *improductivité slave*. It is true. They are the most eager, brilliant, original, and

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charming conversationalists in the world; one reason why they need no athletic sports is because their ordinary conversation is more effective than any setting-up exercises; they are eternally expecting the impossible to happen; had Dickens lived longer, he would have made Micawber a Russian. In Russian novels and plays, various projects are discussed with such ardour, such expense of energy, that to realise them would seem to require considerably less effort; yet they are never realised. An impatient Anglo-Saxon reader wonders why the Russian characters don't "do something"; for he can see no real obstacle in the path. But the obstacle is in the Russian himself, in his lack of practicality. The machine has no motor. They are at once the most lovable and the most irritating of human beings. Nor is this will-power missing only in the intellectuals. One of the best books ever written on Russia is that by E. Nelson Fell, called *Russian and Nomad*. His experiences as a business man with Russian muzhiks should be read by all who are interested in the Slav temperament. Had he not possessed a magnificent sense of humour, he would have given up in despair.

Mr. Gerhardi's book, absolutely up to date, describing a Russian family in 1922, shows that the national characteristics, as set forth by Turgenev in the fifties, have not changed. In addition to the light thrown on the central theme, Mr. Gerhardi has given us a story so

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winsome, so brilliant, so subtle in characterisation, so unusual, that the average intelligent reader will find it irresistible. A new force has appeared in fiction. Hats off!

Chekhov was a physician, whose medical training appears in the power of diagnosis revealed in his stories and plays. (In the *Journal of the American Medical Association* for 4 November 1922, there is an interesting article on him by Doctor Herbert Thoms, of New Haven.)

In his story *On the Way*, Chekhov remarked: "Nature has set in every Russian an enquiring mind, a tendency to speculation, an extraordinary capacity for belief; but all these are broken into dust against our improvidence, indolence, and fantastic triviality."

Futility may be taken as a foot-note to Chekhov: but what a foot-note! It seems more like a foundation.

Yet Chekhov furnished the point of departure for this new novel, and perhaps also the impulse. The hero goes with three Russian sisters to see Chekhov's play, *The Three Sisters*, and, in his blind optimism, he wondered where Chekhov got his characters, not then realising that his three companions were to illustrate Chekhov's powers of portraiture fully as well as the persons on the stage. Could anything be more opportune than the appearance of *Futility* just as *The Three Sisters* appears in New York?

Mr. Gerhardi's powers of irony are sufficiently

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displayed in the following passage. The people are watching the play:

“You know the manner of Chekhov’s writing. You know the people in his plays. It seems as though they had all been born on the line of demarcation between comedy and tragedy—in a kind of No Man’s Land. Fanny Ivanovna and the three sisters watched the play with intense interest, as if *The Three Sisters* were indeed their own particular tragedy. I sat behind Nina, and watched with that stupid scepticism that comes from too much happiness. To me, buoyant and impatient, the people in the play appeared preposterous. They annoyed me. They distressed me intensely. Their black melancholy, their incredible inefficiency, their paralysing inertia, crept over me. How different, I thought, were those three lovable creatures who sat in our box. How careless and free they were in their own happy home. The people in the play were hopeless.”

He relieved his mind to Nikolai, insisting that the people in the play were impossible. But Nikolai said, and the remark turned out to be prophetic, “Chekhov is a great artist.”

Now I submit a good subject for a novel, which I present free to any one who wants it. Take a determined, practical, efficient, common-sense Yankee spinster, full of gumption—the kind of female whom we New Englanders call “a capable woman”—and plant her in a large Russian family in Moscow. Things would

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shortly begin to happen. Aunt Ophelia in St. Clare's family would be nothing to it.

Modern fiction is just now being discussed from the astronomical point of view, owing to the fashion in which Mr. Galsworthy and others have treated the moon. Thirteen years ago, in an essay on Hermann Sudermann, I endeavoured to call the attention of fiction-writers to this phenomenon, but I fear my words made little impression. Stevenson came to grief with the moon in *Prince Otto*, and he repentantly declared that the next time he wrote a novel, he would use an almanac. All novelists seem to need the harmless, necessary almanac. In *Es War*, Sudermann placed a young crescent moon in the eastern sky! And in *Der Katzensteg*, the moon follows the heroine even as in the theatre the calcium-light follows the star. In other words, the moon in novels is not scientific, but decorative. To see it used correctly is exceptional. Francis Brett Young, in his novel called *The Crescent Moon*, represents that slim object as frequently climbing the heavens. Shakespeare, in the *Merchant of Venice*, has the full moon and all the stars visible at the same time, which never happens in the sky. The late Hugh McCulloch, a poet of distinct promise, wrote a poem for the *Century Magazine*, and the last line of every stanza was

And in the west the waning moon hangs low.

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I found him in a state of rage, because the editor had changed "waning" to "weary." He wrote to his mentor angrily, saying he was a poet, not an astronomer, and he would place his moon where he jolly well pleased. The answer was to the effect that he might place his moon wherever he liked in other periodicals, but not in the *Century*. He surrendered to science.

I wish I might read one American novel where the heroine's eyes were not compared to pools. Every new one I read fills me with a vague sporting interest as to exactly on what page the pool will make its first appearance. Violet pools, deep pools, dark pools, troubled pools, untroubled pools, forest pools—how I wish this ocular geography would change! But as nearly all novelists follow the prevailing fashion, I have little hope. The girl model of 1923 must be fitted to a pair of pools.

In reading Esther Singleton's interesting and valuable book, *The Shakespeare Garden*, I newly lament my ignorance of flowers. I have a perfect literary knowledge of them. I know the names of all the flowers but cannot remember their faces. The common, or garden, rose and the lily-of-the-valley are the only two flowers I know by sight. I should hate to pass an examination in a garden; I cannot tell a begonia from a four-o'clock. Why is it that all women know the names and faces of flowers by intuition? An enormous number of man-made novels have

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what I call the Botanical Beginning. The first three pages sound like D. M. Ferry's catalogue. Yet the truth is, that few men know anything whatever about flowers. A distinguished Bostonian scholar told me that if no flowers at all came up in the spring, he would be unaware of their absence. Yet how explain these man-made novels where, in the first three pages, specifically named flowers trail all over the veranda, rage like Herod all over the lawn, and almost smother the reader with their incense? My own belief is that in nearly every case the botanical beginning is either a queen's gambit—that is, the flower-names are all supplied by the author's wife—or it is pure bluff.

The Shakespeare Garden should interest all who love Shakespeare or flowers and particularly those who are acquainted with both. It is a valuable and important contribution to the subject, is written from the heart, and the numerous illustrations help an ignoramus like me to obtain some notion of the actual appearance of Elizabethan flowers. Fortunately it requires no botany to appreciate such magic lines as

And winking mary-buds begin
To ope their golden eyes.

What really is plagiarism? One of our popular magazines recently published a short story where the entire plot, except the conclusion, was taken from Browning's *In a Balcony*. The editor announced that the woman who signed her

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name to the story "proves that the most powerful stories are not necessarily written by men." Did she feel that Browning's tragedy is so well known that any one has a right to transprose it? Or did she think that the readers of this particular periodical would never detect its source? Even the title was taken from Browning, though from another poem. Surely the editor did not guess its origin, else why did he point with pride to what he thought it proved?

The justly distinguished dramatic critic of *The Nation*, Mr. Ludwig Lewisohn, writes the following sentence concerning Channing Pollock's play *The Fool*, one of the most popular plays now running in New York: "Its spirit is so fine, its intentions so honourable to the author, that it seems difficult to characterise it as a work of art." Just exactly what does that pronouncement mean? If the spirit of a work is fine, and its "intentions honourable," is the thing therefore doubly and fatally handicapped? I have during the last year seen so many books, where the spirit was abominable and the intentions worse, characterised as great works of art, that I was for the moment nonplussed. But I suppose that the accomplished critic merely meant to say that the play contained such earnest pleading, and showed so sympathetic a heart, that it was difficult to judge it simply on its artistic merits.

Another dramatic critic, George Jean Nathan,

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is so disgusted with Barrie's *Mary Rose*, that he solemnly announces he is beginning to lose faith in Barrie's earlier works; "It brings one to turn again to a closer scrutiny of its author's antecedent plays that one has admired, and to ponder . . . and to ponder. . . ." I can only imagine with what heartrending suspense J. M. Barrie must be awaiting the result of this portentous and ponderous pondering. . . .

A novelist that may make us all sit up some day is young Waldo Frank. His philosophy of life is the opposite of mine, and I should not wish to be born into the kind of world in which he believes; but he is an original writer, with an original method. His radicalism in art begins where that of others quits; but he has a great deal to say, and he is both honest and sincere. To those who are interested in the newest developments in the art of fiction, I recommend *City Block*. But it is not, as the French say, for all hands.

Charles D. Stewart, the author of *The Fugitive Blacksmith* and *Partners of Providence*, has proved that his creative powers as a novelist are as fresh and vigorous as in his youth. He has proved it by his latest book, *Valley Waters*, a well-constructed, well-written, and altogether delightfully populated story. The citizens of Zanesville, Ohio, should give him the freedom of

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the city and erect a monument to him while he is yet alive; for the interesting and astounding fact is that, although he was born in Zanesville, *he loves the town*. Before I had finished reading the book, I made a vow to go on a pilgrimage to Zanesville. I thought I had been in every part of Ohio, but, in some unaccountable manner, I missed Zanesville. The theme of *Valley Waters* is as old as literature; but the characters are so real—even the minor ones—and the style is so masterly in its restraint, that I shall be sorry for any one who does not like it. The author's varied and detailed experience of life stands him in good stead; the novel abounds in shrewd observations. *Valley Waters* is solid without being heavy; it is solid like a perfect apple, the kind that come from Hood River, good all the way to the core. Mr. Stewart, who knows the worst phases of humanity, seems to believe in life; that the custom of birthday congratulations springs from a true instinct.

To turn from an excellent to a notorious writer, I was much amused to see in a newspaper this morning the following publisher's advertisement of Robert Keable's latest novel. "Some of the early reviews . . . criticise the author because he has not 'told a story' in the conventional style." This is like criticising a murderer because he wears detachable cuffs.

Those who are not yet familiar with John V. A. Weaver's poems, *In American*, had better lose

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no time; it is the sort of book that eventually becomes much sought after by collectors. Now he has just printed another one, *Finders*. It is impossible to describe John Weaver's poetry; one must read it or, still better, hear Mr. Weaver read it. He has humour, pathos, and tragic force in his New York slang poems. I have seen nothing I enjoyed so much in this fashion since Wallace Irwin's incomparable *Love Sonnets of a Hoodlum*. Will any one tell me why that work is not in freer circulation? There ought to be fresh editions of it every year, but several lustra have passed since I have seen any copy exposed for sale. In my opinion, the *Love Sonnets of a Hoodlum*, by Irwin, and *Casey at the Bat* are representative and permanent specimens of American literature.

Carl Sandburg has written a charming, quaintly nonsensical, and highly imaginative book, called *Rootabaga Stories*. I confidently recommend this to all children and their parents, relations, and friends. Personally I think it far better than his other prose works, such as *Smoke and Steel*, and *Chicago Poems*.

Nearly every post brings some candidate for the Ignoble prize. A Texas professor suggests the Elgin Marbles in the British Museum. A woman votes for *Jane Eyre*, and I agree with her to this extent. I always resent Charlotte Brontë's being bracketed with Jane Austen and George Eliot as the three great women novelists

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of the nineteenth century. She lacked what the other two richly possessed—genius.

Question. What is the best novel ever written by a woman?

Answer. *Pride and Prejudice.*

IX

THE English language is sadly in need of a new word, or perhaps a new phrase, which should perform the enormous, varied, and specific work so easily and neatly accomplished in three other languages respectively by *n'est-ce pas*, *nicht wahr*, and *non è vero*. And at the same time we must discover or invent a negative interrogatory for "I am." Suppose you are the last person to arrive at a dinner-party, and you wish to make a remark equally compounded of enquiry and apology. All goes well with your sentence until you reach the rising inflexion at its conclusion. "I am a little late, am I not, ain't I, am't I, aren't I?"—which shall it be? "Am I not" is absolutely correct, and looks well enough in print, but orally it sounds pedantic, rather stiff, as though somehow you were giving the others a gratuitous and unsolicited lesson in grammatical etiquette, and thus casts a slight chill over the pleasant company; it certainly would not go well with a cocktail. To-day there are more persons who would rather be ungrammatical than stilted; and while I myself am not in the least afraid of using good grammar always and everywhere, there are informal gatherings where "am I not" is a bit thick. Jane Austen would have gone even further, and said "am not I?" an expression which I have

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never heard. "Ain't I?" is both incorrect and vulgar, but unless something is done, and as Macbeth remarked, done quickly, it will prevail, and we shall be forced to surrender to usage. It is already making rapid strides in England. Rather than yield to "ain't I?" I would choose "am't I." With these two ruled out, there remains "aren't I?" I hereby declare war on this expression. I hate it. I will not say "aren't I?" No, not if every other person in the world says it. I am not squeamish, but I cannot swallow the negative of "I are." Furthermore, I regard it as a base and cowardly evasion of the challenge with which I opened this discussion. What, then, is to be done, and who will come to save us? Already there is a piece of good-natured slang which is gaining ground every day, and which is a substitute both for "ain't I?" and the three foreign phrases cited above. This is the cheerful interrogation, "what?" used as follows. "I am a little late, what?" or, "This has been a terrible winter, what?" But it is not yet the way in which you would address an archbishop.

It may be that we shall have eventually to do what has been done in many other cases where our own language is inadequate—simply borrow from foreigners. They have borrowed so much money from us that we ought not to have any scruples in borrowing one more expression from them. Just as we say "éclat," why cannot we say "n'est-ce pas" and be

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done with it? Has any one anything better to suggest? At present, it is amusing to see by what various devices the difficulty is dodged. A conversationalist begins a sentence confidently, suddenly sees this obstacle ahead, and employs curious and wonderful circumlocutions. "N'est-ce pas" has also this advantage: it is one of the few foreign phrases which every one can pronounce.

We have so little grammar in the English language that I regret to see further losses. I will not say "It is me," no matter how august the orifice from which I hear it. I notice that some school-teacher in the West urges its adoption, on the ground that it is impossible to make the pupils say "It is I." In other words, if the standard is irksome, lower it to suit human convenience, the method adopted so frequently in the sphere of morals. I am not convinced by that argument. It is true that the English generally say "It is me." But there are many divergences between good English and good American usage, and there always will be. For example, the following expression is quite correct in England, but it would sound rather queer in America; if you knocked at some one's door, and he sleepily remonstrated, you might say in England, "It is me; I thought you had woken."

There are those who defend "It is me" on the ground that the French say "C'est moi."

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Even if this were a true analogy, the argument would still be worthless. But the fact is otherwise. At the end of Lavedan's play *Le Marquis de Priola* the question is asked "Who will take care of him?" and the young man responds, "Moi." Just try to translate that word by "me."

An Englishman once told me that "he don't" is an Americanism, and that he had never heard any English person use it. I wonder at his lack of observation. I have heard many Englishmen say it, and it frequently appears in English conversations in English novels. This is also one of the phrases defended by the Western school-teacher, but it is not pretty.

The English language, easiest of all languages to learn to read, write, talk, and understand, is the most difficult to pronounce correctly. We, therefore, who are natives, ought to take pride in speaking it accurately. It is rapidly becoming a world-language, and we are lucky who have it as a birthright, for it is the most useful of all. Yet out of the millions who talk English, how few there are who speak it with precision! The difficulty of the task ought to be an incentive to the courageous mind.

I am glad that an organisation has been formed with the avowed object of improving pronunciation in America. May good fortune attend it. It is called the National Association for American Speech, and one of its objects is

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to improve the enunciation of actors. Many actors are not heard.

I am always amused when I read, as I do often, the statement that every college should teach its students to speak and write English correctly. I wonder if those who urge this realise how extremely rare is such an accomplishment. I have not met six persons in my life who invariably use correct English. I doubt if I have ever heard an extempore public address of any length that was not marred by some error in grammar, not to mention mistakes in pronunciation. But it is certainly the duty of every school and college teacher in America, no matter what subject he teaches, to improve if possible the speech-habit of his pupils. One way to accomplish this is by setting a good example. And the teacher should invariably correct errors.

It would be well if the social aristocracy in every country took as much care of their morals and of their speech as they do of their manners and of their appearance. But the history of society is discouraging. In that powerful book, *The Glass of Fashion*, whose author seems to be a combination of a newspaper man and John the Baptist, a terrific indictment is hurled at the leaders of English society, because (he says) they have betrayed morality. They have more influence on the standards of morality than the churches, and they are false to their trust. Well, it has usually been no better in the less-important

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matter of speech. The aristocrat has often handled his language with cynical indifference, in the assurance that there is no one to call him to account. I will do so then. In Browning's poem *My Last Duchess*, the final touch of high breeding and hauteur is given to the Duke, when he says carelessly:

Even had you skill in speech—which I have not.

He will talk like a gentleman, not like a professional.

There is comfort in the thought that those who habitually misuse positions of responsibility eventually cease to hold them. When Malcolm rehearsed a list of his vices to Macduff, and asked if such as he were fit to govern, the honest soldier replied:

Fit to govern! No, not to live.

I make no apology for spending so much time on pronunciation, for it deserves much more. Henry James thought it of sufficient weight to carry a whole lecture. There is no rarer sound in the world than perfect English coming from the lips of one whose mother tongue is something else. I remember meeting on an ocean-liner a cultivated Polish gentleman who spoke English with fluent inaccuracy. I complimented him on the ease with which he, like so many other Slavs, spoke other languages than his own, and added that with the exception of the pronuncia-

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tion, he spoke English as easily as anybody. He was indignant, and insisted that he spoke English exactly as well as any native. I offered to give him an English sentence, and leave him alone with it three hours; and said I was certain that he would not be able to pronounce it correctly. He demurred at the three hours, declaring it to be an insult, and wished to read the phrase at sight. But I was firm. I took him to the smoking-room, wrote out the sentence, and returned in three hours. This is the sentence:

*Though the tough cough and hiccough plough
me through.*

I wish you could have seen and heard him. He made a number of false starts, and finally got into such a condition that he could not pronounce a single word in the collection. I thought he was going to lose his mind.

It is an excellent sentence to try on that vast number of foreigners who fancy their English.

Gentle reader, what is your custom when some one mispronounces a word in a question, and you are compelled to use the word in your answer? Do you pronounce it correctly, and incur eternal hostility, or do you basely imitate an error, in order to preserve amenity? I have had particularly bad luck with the Himalaya Mountains. If I accent the second syllable, my chance acquaintance stresses the third; and in-

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variably vice versa. There are unpleasant moments in life.

The American Academy of Arts and Letters made a good choice in electing Professor Stuart Sherman of Illinois to take the place made vacant by the death of Thomas Nelson Page. Professor Sherman is an excellent scholar, a shrewd and penetrating critic, a man who is interested both in classic and contemporary literature, and who believes in maintaining standards. His literary style shows learning without pedantry, wit without buffoonery, and vigour without vulgarity. All who love to see art take a higher place in our national life should rejoice that the academy, through the generosity of a benefactor, now has a building in New York, exclusively devoted to the work of this body and of the institute. Here records will be kept, including all publications by the members, regular meetings will be held, prizes for excellence in literature and art publicly awarded, and the good cause dignified and strengthened. The building was formally opened on February 22, with an address by Sir Frederick Kenyon, president of the British Academy. The Gold Medal for distinction in drama was awarded to Eugene O'Neill, and it was richly deserved.

Can anything be done to check the American habit of pronouncing Juliet as a word of three syllables, *Ju-li-et*? My ear is constantly tor-

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mented by this abomination. We all make mistakes in pronunciation, but we ought to endeavour to lessen their number. It is just as distressing to hear a blaring error in pronunciation as it is to hear a discord in music. It is as absurd to say Ju-li-et as it would be to say Ju-li-an or Ju-li-us or Ju-li-a.

I never saw Adelaide Neilson, who, if veteran theatregoers are to be trusted, came near to being an ideal Juliet; and I saw Mary Anderson only as Rosalind. But I have seen many actresses consorting with Romeo, and the best Juliet I ever saw is Jane Cowl. She is effective every moment from her first surrender to love to the final sacrifice. She rises to the height of tragic intensity, when the occasion demands it; and in the balcony scene, she is irresistible. She is girlish, impetuous, a flame of passion; she is the incarnation of youth in love. Her whole-hearted giving of herself is so complete that there is no place for coquetry, no pretence of retreat or reserve; the wealth of passion is so abundant that economy would be folly. Juliet is too young to dissimulate; she has the forthright simplicity of a child. As Jane Cowl impersonates her, she seems to feel the newness, wonder, and ecstasy of a strange emotion; as different from the light-hearted gaiety of yesterday as poetry from prose. In the moonlight dialogue, the lovers, in Goethe's phrase, taste "the topmost sparkling foam on the freshly-poured cup of love."

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Another notable Shakespearean production of the present season is David Belasco's arrangement of *The Merchant of Venice*. This is the most beautiful and complete stage-presentation of this play that I have ever seen. Every one who witnesses it wishes the author were present; he would assuredly enjoy the succession of artistic and elaborate pictures. Furthermore in the Belasco version the interest is steadily maintained. Booth made it so short (stopping with the exit of Shylock) that another play was given with it, to fill out the evening; but here the play lasts from eight till a little after eleven, and there are no long pauses. Is the absence of liquor-bars the reason why there are now no long pauses between the acts in New York? If so, that should be used as an argument for maintaining prohibition. In former times, the pauses were so frequent and so prolonged that the acts of the play seemed like bits of drama interposed every now and then in a long and desultory evening. When foreign companies came hither, it was even worse; they used to say that if ever Sarah Bernhardt grew old, it would be between the acts. Mr. Belasco has published his version of the *Merchant*, with an exceedingly interesting autobiographical introduction, in which he promises to give other and seldom-seen dramas of Shakespeare. I sincerely hope he will do this, and I look forward with keen interest to his production of *King Lear*, with David Warfield, who I think should be impressive. I

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have seen this greatest of all tragedies only twice; once in Germany, and once in America with Robert Mantell.

Mr. Warfield was uninspiring as Shylock, though he held the audience. Not for a moment did I lose the actor in his rôle. It was always David Warfield reciting the lines in a declamatory fashion, with carefully studied gestures and business. He was at his best in the trial scene, but even there he seemed to me artificial. Yet not for anything would I have missed the splendid production, which will linger long in my mind as a thing of beauty.

I have been rather fortunate in Shylocks, having seen Edwin Booth, Henry Irving, Richard Mansfield, Walter Hampden, Edward Sothorn, David Warfield, and the great German actor Ernst von Possart. The best Shylock of them all was Edwin Booth, who, on the night I saw him, was inspired.

I fervently suggest another candidate for the Ignoble Prize—*Peer Gynt*, by Henrik Ibsen. At this moment it is playing to packed houses daily in New York, but I was so bored—so unspeakably bored—that I left at the end of the third act. Surely it is not the fault of the Theatre Guild. I do not see how the play could be better mounted, or better acted. This wonderful company do all that can be done with it. I never found the book interesting reading, and I did not care for it in the motion-pictures; but I

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had such well-founded confidence in the ability of the Theatre Guild to make anything interesting, that I went to the theatre with high expectations and bright faith. This same group of actors and directors had kept me sharply attentive throughout two plays that had seemed in the reading impossible; Shaw's *Heartbreak House* and *Back to Methuselah*. These talky dramas, in comparison with *Peer Gynt*, seem sensational and melodramatic. To me *Peer Gynt* is the champion bore of the year, and I am done with it forever.

A correspondent suggests for the Ignoble Prize no less a person than Walt Whitman, whose fame is certainly broader and higher at this moment than ever before. To me, he is one of the American poets, and a man of genius. Yet there is an enormous amount of rubbish in his complete works. In many of his pages, I see nothing but a Sears-Roebuck catalogue with calliope accompaniment. Would I place him above Edgar Allan Poe? I would not. And if I could read only one American poet, would it be Whitman? It would not. One hour of Poe is worth a cycle of Old Walt. But there are passages in the Camden bard, especially his first lines, that affect me like the ocean, the prairie, and the stars.

An extremely interesting book came into my hands to-day. It is *Parodies on Walt Whitman*, compiled by Henry S. Saunders, with a preface by Christopher Morley, and published by the

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American Library Service. Here is a collection of parodies beginning with the year 1857 and ending with 1921. Most of them are failures because it is impossible to parody Walt in the burlesque manner; his own "poems" surpass any possible exaggeration. The fact is so much more strange than the fiction, that the imitation falls patently short. But some of the parodies, those done by literary experts, are well worth the admission fee to this particular circus. And of the seventy-nine specimens, the best is by that master of wit and raillery, that altogether irresistible gentleman, Henry C. Bunner. This is called *Home Sweet Home with Variations*, and was originally published in *Scribner's Monthly* in May 1881.

Christopher Morley's preface is charming. I read Morley's column every day in the New York *Evening Post*. Morley's ghost is in everything he writes, and I especially recommend his latest book, *Where the Blue Begins*. This is such a combination of literature and theology, that it might well be called, remembering the hero, *Literature and Dogma*. There are some things in it I wish he had left out; but there are many things that no one else could have put in. Morley is a wit, a man of letters, an artist, and a personal force. He is chock-full of convictions and of enthusiasm, yet looks out on the world with the tolerance of the genuine humorist.

My remark in the February number that of

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all the plays I had ever seen at the *Comédie Française*, the one that made the most lasting impression was *Les Caprices de Marianne*, by Alfred de Musset, has drawn enthusiastic comment from a reader who is even older than I, and has seen much more of the world. He writes: "You do well to cry for the *Caprices de Marianne*. I saw it twice in 1867. It was the best thing I ever saw." He goes on to say that the only performance that can compare with it in merit was Chekhov's *Cherry Orchard*, which he saw in Petrograd, and which I have now seen by the same company in New York. He then quotes an article by Félix Duquesnel which appeared in the *Temps* some years ago. "I cannot prevent myself from taking a long journey backward, and seeing again, by the power of thought, a performance of *Les Caprices de Marianne* at which I was present when I was twenty years old. It has remained in my memory, for I think on that night I saw perfection in the theatre. How time goes by! It seems now as if I had just seen this admirable performance; I see again the players and I hear the sound of their voices. It is true that there is a philosopher who says that time is stationary and immovable, and that only men pass."

I am glad to be reinforced in my recollections by this American scholar and by this veteran French critic. There is something time-defying about *Les Caprices de Marianne*; it leaves a peculiar brightness in the memory, something

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of imperishable loveliness, which subsequent impressions are powerless to efface.

I am pleased to see that there is to be a complete edition of the works of that extraordinary man, W. H. Hudson. In many ways he was the king of naturalists. I have seen some of the first volumes, and the publishers have made their appearance worthy of the author. A member of the American firm gives me the following highly interesting information:

"Last March I had the joy and the privilege of spending three days with Hudson. We were in the extreme southwest of England. Mr. Hudson was living then in a workman's cottage at Penzance. We motored all about the country and I found, from personal contact, a beautiful soul, full of fire, radiating love for everything and yet at the same time having as a part of his outer shell some of that caution and suspicion of man often found in wild animals.

"One point about Hudson which has been literally overlooked is the fact that Hudson's father, as I understood Mr. Hudson, was born in Boston, and his grandfather came from England to Boston about 1808. Hudson's mother was a Miss Kimball, from New Hampshire. At the age of nineteen Hudson's father was working on the docks in Boston. Something fell on him, crushing his chest. The doctor in Boston at the time informed him that probably he would never be able to stand the rigour of that climate with his bruised chest. He was in love with

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Miss Kimball, who was seventeen years old at the time. They talked the matter over together. She decided, or rather insisted, on marrying him and then migrating to the Argentine. It was quite evident that Mr. Hudson's father was probably more or less shiftless, although the author never allowed himself to speak of his father other than with reverence and respect. Hudson had a wonderful love, admiration, and loyalty for his mother. This was one of his consuming passions."

On the wall of a room in my house hangs a framed sampler, wrought by the little hands of my grandmother, Sophia Lyon, in the year 1790, when she was about five years old. In addition to some rather formal decoration it contains this cheerful poem:

There is an hour when I must die,
Nor do I know how soon 'twill come:
A thousand children young as I
Are called by death to meet their doom.

Poor baby! Working out carefully every letter of those mortuary verses, when she ought to have been playing with her dolls, or enjoying the air of heaven. The Puritans were determined not to let even small children forget the certainty of death combined with the uncertainty of its zero hour. If they heard the laughter of children, they felt that something ought to be done about it. And yet as carriers of gloom-germs I do not think they were so effec-

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tive as many of our modern atheistic novelists. The Puritans were in earnest, and they felt that life was serious; but they had a solid faith in the ultimate rightness of things; they believed that this was God's world, and that its darkness was followed by eternal sunshine. When they admonished little folks to behave themselves, and broke in on their careless happiness with thoughts of the grave, they had what seemed to them good ultimate reasons. But the modern pessimist, with no philosophy of life at all, and with no hope for humanity either here or hereafter, is fully as determined as the old Puritan not to let us have any fun. The moment we set out to read a cheerful book or see a rollicking comedy, we are called sternly to order; such things are not true art. Rebecca West says that *The Enchanted April*, a novel written just for fun and as full of fun as an Italian on a holiday, is a "disaster"; and the solemn dogmatic critics assure us that May Sinclair's *Life and Death of Harriett Frean*, in which the details of death by cancer are elaborately set forth, is profound art. I see no reason why we should not all enjoy life, if we can; I think tears have no more intellectual worth than laughter. If the percentage of cerebration in books is to be measured merely by the depth of gloom it will become easier and easier to be a genius. The Puritans had a reason for their solemnity, and they believed that out of that dark soil bright flowers would spring; but the modern pessimist offers us no

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flowers, but simply more dirt. The dog returns to his scriptural menu.

It is curious that so many should believe that cheerfulness is incompatible with brains. Look at the people listening to a symphony concert. Many of them are plainly cherishing the vain hope that others will believe them to be intelligent, if only they can succeed in looking sufficiently depressed.

X

Two regrettable facts in life spring partly from the same cause; the facts are chronic unhappiness and slovenly work, both of which are too common to escape observation. The cause is the inability of the average person to combine duty and pleasure. The majority are forever seeking pleasure outside of the job, and when the job is purely mechanical perhaps they are not to be blamed. If, by some miracle, the factory worker or miner could perform his task as the old-fashioned carpenter, shoemaker, or mediæval artisan worked at his speciality, the "labour problem" would be very nearly solved. No doubt the nature of the task would have to change as well as the mind of the labourer. I regard myself as an extremely fortunate man in many ways, and particularly in this—that the work by which I make my living is a constant delight; it is exactly what I should wish to do if I lived on invested capital. Even if I were a millionaire, I could not more enjoy doing voluntarily the things which I am now forced to do—teaching, learning, lecturing, and writing. The pleasantest thought that I have on rising in the morning is the necessary work that awaits me; do you wonder that I call myself fortunate?

I am sorry for those whose work has in it nothing of the spirit of adventure; but I remon-

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strate with those who, although their work is individual and creative, still regard it as drudgery. I was talking a little while ago with one of the leading singers of the Metropolitan Opera House. She said: "The public have a completely mistaken idea of the life of a prima donna; they think it must be wonderfully happy, filled with pleasure, meeting the gayest people, having constant excitement, being taken out to dinner every night. As a matter of fact, it is a life of the hardest and most unremitting toil, scarcely any fun at all." Did she not make the cardinal error of forgetting that the chief fun of her life lay in the work itself? It ought to be a delight to interpret before enthusiastic audiences masterpieces of music.

Most persons are afraid to confess either that they are happy or that they enjoy their work. Some are superstitious, and fear that if they say they are happy, some jealous and mysterious force will take their happiness away; others are so afflicted by the insidious disease of self-pity that they have acquired the habit of regarding themselves as protagonists in tragedy. Two weeks of influenza would make their ordinary daily activities seem more alluring.

One of the reasons for commending the sincerity of that strangely assorted pair, Mencken and Nathan, is that both enjoy their lives and their work so ardently, and never hesitate to proclaim the fact. I suppose I differ from each and both of those men on nearly every conceiv-

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able topic except on this; and I defy them to get any more fun out of life than I.

The conventional attitude toward work, that duty and pleasure cannot live together, is taken, curiously enough, by Franklin P. Adams, whose verse and prose in the New York *World* add so much happiness to our daily existence. Some time ago in this magazine, I wrote: "More people ought to read Milton for pleasure." F. P. A. did me the honour to comment on the remark; he thinks oughtness and pleasure cannot be associated. "The word 'ought' ought not to be in the same sentence with the word 'pleasure.'" Well, I think it ought to be, and that if the two words were more frequently combined, the sum of human happiness would be increased. Only to-day I read this *obiter dictum*: "But duty may often best be performed if it is viewed more as a pleasure than as a job." Who wrote that homily? Ralph Waldo Emerson? The author is George Jean Nathan.

I am sorry for all who have to seek happiness outside of office hours. The blue bird should not require an expensive and elaborate equipment for his pursuit. Many people speak of the careless happiness of childhood, as though in our infancy happiness were chronic. It was not so with me. At that primitive period, my pleasures consisted of *interruptions*. The exceptional events were the things of joy. Saturday was the best day of the week, while Christmas, New Year, and the Fourth of July were

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delirious. Now, so far as I am concerned, I do not care a rap for these special occasions. I like to see children enjoy themselves, and it is pleasant to contribute to their enjoyment; but for my own part, I look forward to Christmas without a thrill. Does this mean that I have lost my happiness? On the contrary, it means that now every day is Christmas. Instead of looking forward to some special event to bring happiness, the only thing I ask is that there may be no interruption. If I can remain sufficiently healthy to work, that is all I require. Every day brings with it enough excitement in professional labour and relaxation in sport and social life, so that I ask nothing unusual—it is the usual thing that I fear to lose rather than the unusual thing I wish to grasp.

Gorki's view of life in Russia, as he knew it in his childhood, would seem to be exactly the opposite of what I have been endeavouring to describe as my chronic condition. In his autobiography he said that the ordinary daily existence of the average Russian was so unspeakably dull and hopeless that families were glad when their houses burned down, because it was something different. Even a disaster was a relief. Gorki never was a cheerful writer. The chief thing that impressed him at Coney Island was an intense gloom and the expression of hopelessness he saw on all the faces.

William T. Tilden, 2d, the champion lawn-

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tennis player of the world, is an author as well as an athlete. I am reading his new book, *Singles and Doubles*. He is more careless in writing than in playing, for on page 26 he says that in 1909 McLoughlin was seventeen and on page 27 that he is now only thirty-three. Furthermore there are many typographical errors, due apparently to carelessness. For example: "That man is the greatest tennis genius that the world has ever known, Norman S. Brookes, of Australia." The slip brings to mind a story once told to me, with chuckle-accompaniment, by William Howard Taft, Chief Justice of the United States. He said that he was once presented to an audience as follows: "We have with us to-day one whose name is a household word, one whose name is known to every man, woman, and child in these United States—William Henry Taft."

These surface-flecks should be removed in subsequent editions, which the book will certainly reach. Tilden is a player of genius, but he is also a Personality. He is a student of the game and of his opponent; the psychology of athletes interests him as much as their skill. His tennis treatise contains not only valuable hints, entertaining anecdotes of champions, and short dramatic histories of various matches, but an earnest plea that tennis in the secondary schools should be made a major sport. The reason why the supremacy in this game has passed from England to America is largely

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owing to the fact that it is not treated with respect in the English public schools; it does not begin to have the standing accorded to cricket and football, and is thought to be not sufficiently masculine for boys to play seriously. In our country it is popular in both schools and colleges; students love to watch football, but they love to play tennis. Now, if we can take the one additional step, and make it a recognised major sport, so that there will be in the eyes of youth as much glory in being a tennis champion as in being a half-back, two things will be accomplished: the Davis Cup will stay in America, and, what is more important, the health and strength of the average school and college student will be improved. For, as Mr. Tilden justly says, the games that receive among the young the highest plaudits are those that practically no one plays after leaving college. Men do not play football, nor row in shells, nor run around a track, nor, with few exceptions, play baseball; whereas tennis and golf can be and are played as long as one lives. If one becomes expert early, by beginning with the right method, one has a means of enjoyment and health that must be rated as a valuable asset.

I am glad that Mr. Tilden pays a justly deserved tribute to Maurice McLoughlin, of California, the most beloved player who ever swung a racquet. It was the appearance of this individual on the courts that not only changed the pace of the game but gave it its present prodig-

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ious popularity. As a mere spectator and player-for-the-fun-of-it, I am certain that McLoughlin not only revolutionised the sport but is mainly responsible for a revolution in the attitude of the public. He did more for tennis than any other man. Here is what Mr. Tilden says: "Mac appealed to the boy that is in all men. His merry smile, the happy toss of his head when he missed a shot, his never failing good nature under any circumstances, whether victory or defeat, made him the idol of all who saw him. In the brilliant game and gleaming personality of McLoughlin tennis found a missionary who carried the doctrine of the game to all classes. It is to him that America owes the change of tennis from a class game to one of national importance."

McLoughlin was popular not only because of his magnificent, reckless attack (for his defence lay in his invincible attack), but because of the charm of the man. Every one who saw him loved him. He was an ideal sportsman. When he lost the final match in 1915 hundreds of spectators wept unrestrainedly. One heard the sobbing cry, "Maury is beaten!" Was there ever a stronger tribute to the personality of an athlete? And although to the universal dismay of sport-lovers, McLoughlin lost his skill just when he should have been at his best, he has the satisfaction of knowing that his influence on the game is both fine and permanent.

There is only one person whom the crowd

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loves more than a good winner, and that is a good loser, whether the thing lost is the Presidency of the United States or a tennis championship. W. H. Taft and M. E. McLoughlin are universally beloved. All statesmen and athletes should endeavour to profit by their example. Nothing wearies the public more than a controversy after defeat.

I remember when the news came that Mr. Robert Fitzsimmons had been knocked out by Mr. James J. Jeffries. Hard upon this tidings came the statement of Mr. Fitzsimmons that before the match he had been drugged. This question was referred to the greatest fighter of all time, that mundane philosopher, John L. Sullivan. He meditated a moment and handed down the following decision: "I have advised Fitz to cut out the dope talk. It is of course possible that he had been doped, but it is my opinion that the cop he got on the jaw in the second round had something to do with his feelings."

Let me add that I never saw a prize-fight, and have no intention of seeing one. But professional fisticuffs do not shock me, and I see no reason for all the hurly-burly against them. Thousands of good people who are shocked because two athletes strike each other with fists uphold murder between nations as not only necessary, but holy. If I could swallow a camel, I would not strain at a gnat.

The all-but-universal interest in a prize-fight is a fact that we must recognise. It may be

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lamentable, but there is no good pretending it isn't so. It extends itself into unsuspected localities. Let me repeat here a true story I told in *The Nation* years ago. My father was an orthodox Baptist minister. He was a good man and is now with God. He had never mentioned the subject of prize-fighting and I was not aware that he took the slightest interest in it. When he was well over seventy, I was reading the news to him one day, and I read the head-line, "Corbett Whips Sullivan." I was about to pass on to matters of importance, when to my amazement he leaned forward and said earnestly: "Read it by rounds."

A man of some intellectual distinction told me a little while ago that he would rather be the champion prize-fighter than have any other honour. "Just think, how wonderful it must be to visit any city in the world and know that you can lick any man in the town!" He paused and added thoughtfully: "And to realise that they know it too."

The best book about prize-fighting is Bernard Shaw's *Cashel Byron's Profession*. It is the best, not only because it is the best-written, but because there is no idealisation, as in football stories. Boxing is a profession, and an exceedingly practical one, where the financial rewards are high, and the physical danger not nearly so great as in many other callings.

In the April number I expressed my undying

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admiration for that American classic, *Casey at the Bat*. I would have given the author's name, had I known it. I have been informed that the writer is Ernest L. Thayer, who was graduated from Harvard in 1885, and who now lives in Santa Barbara. The authentic version, which differs in some details from the one so thrillingly recited by De Wolf Hopper, was printed many years ago in the *Worcester Gazette*, with some interesting information. Mr. Thayer was Ivy Orator of the class of 1885 at Harvard, and was also president and editor-in-chief of *The Lampoon*. After graduation he was, for a time, on the staff of the San Francisco *Examiner*, in which newspaper the poem made its first appearance. It was copied widely, often with local names substituted. The mighty Kelley, when requested to make a speech, used to recite it, using his own name instead of that of Casey. In the first edition the poem was signed "Phin" and the name of the author was not discovered until he was living in Worcester, to which city he moved from San Francisco. Years ago, at a benefit at Wallack's Theatre, when two league teams were present, this poem was recited, with cyclonic effect. For many theatrical seasons De Wolf Hopper was forced to recite it between the acts of whatever comic opera he happened to be producing; audiences would yell "Casey" until he was compelled to declaim it. Now his voice will be heard in this poem to all eternity, for it is a victrola record. As for Ernest L.

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Thayer, he should have the satisfaction of knowing that his baseball ballad will outlast nearly every American work written at the same period.

With reference to my remark in the March number that *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Gulliver's Travels* are among the best books for children, the State librarian for Iowa asks me if I have tried these on any normal twentieth-century child. I have not. He has, and reports a signal failure. He proceeds to enquire if I myself have reread these books. I have, and enjoyed them. He has tried and failed. He adds: "These classics seem to have outgrown their usefulness as books for children, or for grown-ups, except as historically illustrating the spirit of the time in which Bunyan and Swift, separately, lived and wrote." Now whether we like any book or not is entirely a matter of personal taste; but I will say that if there are those who do not enjoy reading Bunyan and Swift, why, so much the worse for them. These two authors are not nearly so interesting historically as they are actually. They are classics, not because they illustrate their own period, but because they illustrate—both with amazing literary art—the fundamental and eternal traits in human nature. There are just as many Lilliputians and Yahoos in the world now as there were two hundred years ago, only no writer of to-day has Swift's genius in describing them, so he is still needed. *Gulliver's Travels* will be constantly

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up to date until the millennium is reached, and any one who thinks the millennium is at hand must be blind. As for *Pilgrim's Progress*, I should like to recommend to political heresy-hunters, and to those who wish to kill or imprison men and women who express opinions contrary to their own, the trial scene in "Vanity Fair."

I think it would be well if more twentieth-century children read the classics instead of the ephemeral stuff now arranged "to meet their needs," which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven. Harold Waldo, the California novelist, author of *Stash of the Marsh Country*, writes me in reference to what I said of Cooper. During the Spanish War, when he was a little boy, he was trying to build a replica of an American battleship under the directions of a bigger boy, the self-constituted foreman. Waldo's father "had just brought home from Detroit a set of Cooper, and commanded his son to leave his tools and listen to the reading. My heart yearned toward the forgotten *Iowa*—but soon enough I was deep in the woods around Otsego with Tom Hutter and the ark—on the strange Glimmerglass, with Natty Bumppo, Hurry Harry, Chingachgook, Judith, and the rest! Heavens alive, what a spell of magic! The big boy reproached me severely next day for deserting him. . . . The result was that he borrowed *Deerslayer* 'off me' and in a few days was pestering us for *The Last of the Mohicans*. So

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it went, on down the list to *The Pioneers* and *The Prairie*. He was right on my father's and my heels, that boy!—and we got to be regular close friends once more in talking over those marvellous stories and heroes. He pardoned me my defection, and, accepting my lumber and other materials and the loan of the books, he called it square."

Waldo had a wise father. Possibly if more parents would share their literary adventures with their children, as they do actual ones like camping, the love of books might be acquired early and remain a refuge and a solace long after camping had ceased to be attractive.

The last touch in Waldo's letter is a true picture of the predatory nature of the bigger boy—the bigger beast toward the smaller—the stronger nation toward the weaker. When my brother was a child he was held up on his way to school, and his entire fortune—nine cents—taken away from him by a larger youth. The next day he encountered the same ruffian, and the big boy, with a look of outraged innocence, insisted that one of the pennies was counterfeit, and demanded a good one in exchange. He then called the whole thing square, and doubtless felt he had been magnanimous. To-day he is probably a statesman.

In these pages I praised the publishers of Augustus Thomas's autobiography for making it a light book, easy to hold. Just after reading

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my compliment Professor F. W. C. Meyer, of Rochester, received a German folio Bible printed in 1672, weighing twenty-five pounds, and the title-page bore this comforting legend, which I translate: "Now, however, through the grace of God, we have for the first time printed this book in comfortable and readable shape." The old Bible-readers were a hardy race.

The American poet Benjamin R. C. Low sends me the following interesting anecdote, dealing with one of the foremost men in America. "My grandmother, Mrs. A. A. Low, was spending some time in the south of France, near the coast. One day, while taking a walk by the water, she saw a young boy sketching the sea. She stopped to watch him, and at once saw that he had talent. She asked him why he did not use colours. He replied that he had none. She accordingly purchased a box of water-colours and presented them to the boy. That was the first set of colours used by John Singer Sargent."

The attack on the compulsory study of mathematics, which I launched in the February number, has brought me many exceedingly interesting letters, and I am pleased to see that the teachers of mathematics are those who most heartily approve of what I said. Perhaps this is no matter for wonder. It must be unpleasant to teach the subject to those who have no talent

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for it. In my own case, to teach me mathematics was like trying to collect a bill from a man who had no money, or like urging a paralytic to jump. The superintendent of schools in New Rochelle, Dr. Albert Leonard, writes as follows:

"I have read with hearty approval what you say in *Scribner's* for February about the serious harm that has been done by the wholly unjustified insistence upon mathematics as a part of a college course. You are entirely right in your contention that mathematics should not be required of all students. This is true of high-school no less than of college students. As a university dean for some years I know how large a share tradition has in determining our college courses of study. I have rejoiced that you have spoken so vigorously against a most serious defect in our college requirements."

Arthur Sherburne Hardy, formerly professor of mathematics at Dartmouth, later United States minister to Greece, to Persia, to Switzerland, to Spain, and all the time a distinguished American novelist, writes me his opinion, which, I need not say, fills me with elation:

"As for many years the head of a college department of mathematics, may I voice my approval of your views on the educational value of mathematics as expressed in the February *Scribner's*. Specifically: Beyond geometry and elementary algebra the further pursuit of mathe-

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matics by the general student is of little value, either disciplinary or practical. Geometry is and ought to be in the curriculum for mental discipline. In demonstrating a proposition of Euclid the mind is following tensely a slender logical thread with no extraneous help of symbols—a mis-step is easy and fatal and difficult to retrieve. It makes for close, exact thinking. But the geometrical method as a method of research has been superseded. As such, even in passing from the simple relations of the circle and triangle to the conic sections it becomes increasingly cumbersome, and beyond these it taxed even the genius of Newton.

“In learning geometry for analysis, discipline vanishes. This language of analysis whose alphabet we begin to acquire in algebra is a wonderful organ of expression. It has enabled us to reach results for which no other language is adequate, but the college student who gets beyond this alphabet and elementary grammar, i. e., who acquires this language in the sense of making it what it was designed to be, an *instrument of research*, is a rare case. For the average student it has only the value that the alphabet of any language has—and no more—and almost no disciplinary value whatever. Errors in geometrical reasoning are logical ones, corrected by hard *thinking*—in analysis they are largely clerical, corrected by the eye.

“In short, geometry should be retained for mental discipline, and enough algebra to secure independence of mental arithmetic. Beyond that I would not go. Of course I am not speaking of the special student, nor am I disparaging

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my own subject. But further pursuit of the science for the average student is as futile as advanced musical instruction for the man without a musical ear. For the 'gift' for mathematics is no less unique than that for music."

I had no idea that my denunciation of required mathematics would bring out letters from such authorities. When I was an undergraduate at Yale, I reviewed in the *Yale Literary Magazine* Arthur Hardy's novel *The Wind of Destiny*, which made a lasting impression on my mind. I remember yet how Jack went away with his wife's glove. Seventeen years later he published a sequel, *His Daughter First*, which I reviewed in *The Independent*. His versatility as a writer may be inferred by the fact that his first publication was *Elements of Quaternions*, 1881, and his latest, *No. 13, Rue du Bon Diable*, 1917. I have always maintained that the study of mathematics pointed toward the evil one, and here is proof of it.

I also believe that original novelists and dramatists are, as a rule, good at mathematics, and have profited by the study of it. Look at Thomas Hardy, Joseph Conrad, W. J. Locke, William McFee, and Arthur Hardy. I never wrote a novel or a play, and I suspect that one reason why I could not attain even mediocrity in either form is because of the vacuum in my brain where there should be the mathematical bump. I insist that the study of mathematics not only did me no benefit, but was positively

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injurious. It helped me no more than it would strengthen a boy's body to try every day to lift a safe.

I wish I could believe that the study of plane geometry helped my reasoning faculties. Alas, I don't know whether it might have or not. I only know it did not, for the simple reason that I learned the whole thing by heart and rattled it off like a parrot, without the remotest idea what it meant. And while I was always near the foot of the class in mathematics, I was at the head in pure logic, inductive reasoning, and in John Stuart Mill's *Principles of Logic*, which we studied under one of the ablest men I ever knew, Frank Bigelow Tarbell.

To turn from mathematics to poetry, which is like turning from the Slough of Despond to the Delectable Mountains, I find the following new volumes of American verse especially worth reading: *The Jar of Dreams*, by Lilla Cabot Perry; *Songs of Unrest*, by Bernice Lesbia Kenyon; *The Tide Comes In*, by Clement Wood; *Songs of Youth*, by Mary Dixon Thayer, and *The Waggon and the Star*, by Mary Sinton Leitch. Mrs. Perry is a painter, her portrait of William Dean Howells being the best likeness of him I ever saw. She has written much verse, a small fraction of which she consents to print. There are some fine poems in this new volume. Her husband, Thomas Sergeant Perry, whose name appears so often in the *Letters of William* and

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Henry James, is one of the best literary scholars in America; he has talent for almost everything except publicity and self-advertisement.

Miss Kenyon's little book is her first; the poems are graceful, and the sonnets especially good. Miss Thayer's *Songs of Youth* signalises her first appearance in verse, though she has published two books in prose. This is far superior to them. The spirit of youth, health, and spontaneous happiness inspires her work. It is as joyous as the first of May. Mary Sinton Leitch also makes her début as a poet. Her volume is well named, being full of fact and fancy. She has a decidedly original mind, as she ought to have, being the daughter of the classical scholar, Charlton T. Lewis, and the sister of the literary scholar and poet, Charlton Miner Lewis, whose death in March of this year was a distinct loss to letters. Clement Wood is, of course, one of our best-known American poets. I think *The Tide Comes In* is superior to anything he has previously published. It is full of arresting lines.

In addition to these single volumes of original verse, let me call attention to a popular work by that skilful anthologist, Mrs. Waldo Richards, called *High Tide*, which, by the way, is the name of the town where Edwin Arlington Robinson was born, and with whose poetry the present anthology begins. It has had fourteen printings in America since 1916, and now the English edition appears. One hundred and twenty con-

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temporary English and American poets are represented, the entire collection being confined to cheerful and inspiring verses. There is enough of the other kind to be found elsewhere; so Mrs. Richards hit upon the happy idea of putting forth a volume where all the poetry should be optimistic. Readers are, therefore, warned by me that they will in these pages have nothing of the undoubted comfort to be obtained through vicarious or imaginary suffering.

To see Thomas Hardy in this joyous company is interesting; but our anthologist, who can extract honey from unpromising sources, prints Mr. Hardy's inspiring poem, *The Year's Awakening*.

Shelley said: "Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought." I find myself forced to differ. Our sweetest songs are those written by the best poets, no matter what the subject may be. It is, as T. B. Aldrich proved, delightful to be a blighted being. Pessimism brings a comfort to the heart that no sunshine society can bestow. But granting the fact, I had rather read a cheerful poem written by a great artist than a depressing one written by a poetaster.

The death of Sarah Bernhardt on 26 March was felt in every town and village in Europe, North and South America, and Australia. She was the greatest actor I ever saw, and I have seen Salvini, Booth, Duse, Irving, Jefferson,

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Mansfield, Barrett, Possart, Kainz, Mounet-Sully, Féraudy, Coquelin, Guitry, and others. She was, however, at her best in purely theatrical pieces, just as Irving was better in melodrama like *The Lyons Mail* than in Shakespeare. I liked her more in Sardou than in Racine or Rostand. Never shall I forget her stunning performance of *La Tosca*, in 1892. It was terrific and I came out of the theatre exhausted. It was a display of genius that excelled anything I saw before or since.

She came to New Haven in her private car in 1906. She was then over sixty, but she acted *La Dame aux Camélias* with great spirit. After the play I led a group of professors and undergraduates behind the scenes. I made a speech in horrible French, which amused her, but when I called her "la plus grande actrice de deux siècles," she looked pleased, and nodded in confirmation. Then I presented each man. She made no comment until she met Kenneth McKenzie, who is now head of the department of romance languages in the University of Illinois. "McKenzie! McKenzie!" she exclaimed in an irresistible accent, "quel drôle de nom!" Then I asked her if she would like to hear the Yale cheer, and she expressed a passionate desire for it. We surrounded her, and gave the "long cheer," while she stood in the centre and beat time, like an orchestra conductor. When she spoke to a member of the junior class, Chauncey McCormick, of Chicago, he replied

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to her in such beautiful French that she said: "Ah, what a nice boy. Your mother must have brought you up very well, you speak such excellent French." She was a great person, and the motto on her stationery exactly expressed her attitude toward life—*Quand même*.

XI

I SOMETIMES think there are no persons who, as a class, do more good than professional librarians. The men and women in the cities, villages, and universities who have charge of the books and bring author and reader together, have daily opportunities for elevating human taste and character. It was a librarian in Hartford, Mr. Frank B. Gay, who, when I was a small boy and applied for some books by Oliver Optic, suggested that I read Shakespeare. He remarked that there was no reason why I should read trash *all the time*; and he induced me to try *Julius Cæsar*. I was so captivated by this play that I proceeded to read all the others; I have never forgotten that I owe the impulse to Frank Gay. Librarians are constantly distressed to see juvenile readers, and adult readers with juvenile minds, carrying off froth and piffle, when they might use the precious hours to better advantage; they feel as I suppose a sagacious bartender used to feel when he was forced to supply liquor to a man who already had too much. Librarians should be wise as serpents, harmless as doves. They are undoubtedly the most harmless of all people, which is saying a good deal. They are perhaps our most highly civilised class. There is something in the daily society of thousands of books that makes for civilisation; the

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necessity of quiet in a public library keeps librarians from becoming obstreperous and raucous. Yesterday I received a letter from a man who visits a great public library every day. He writes: "After all, a librarian is sure to be a good man. No librarian ever killed a man, or robbed a church, or stole an automobile. No one of them was ever suspected of a violent crime. They move gently; they don't bump into you; they don't slam doors. They are never offensively profane. No one has ever found a librarian leading or even taking part in lynching."

All this is true. To go from the noisy street into a public library is to go from this mortal coil into eternal calm. The modern librarian is the real servant of the People, and there is no calling that has at once more usefulness and more dignity. The enormous growth of libraries and the still greater increase in the number of people who read, have revolutionised the office and attitude of the librarian. In olden times he was, in every sense of the word, the keeper of the books. He was a watchdog, and his business was to see that no stranger carried off anything. The old ideal came near to realisation in a German public librarian who flourished some fifty years ago. He was asked about his work and he said with a mingling of asperity and pride: "In this library every book is now on the shelves except one; and I know where that one is, and I am going to get it this afternoon."

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Times have changed. The modern librarian is not a watchdog; he is a middleman. The office requires idealism, knowledge, wisdom, and tact. I wonder how many of us realise the enormous influence for good exercised by these peaceable men and women? "No day without a good deed" may not be the motto of their lives but it is something better than a motto—it is an accurate description.

They are, as a class, extremely happy people. Daily association with books and readers makes them cheerful. Every day they see enquiring faces and they know the answer. It is the perfect illustration of the law of supply and demand. It is as agreeable to give a boy or girl with an asking face, the book that satisfies, as it is to see starving children eat. I used to wonder why women, who as a rule eat little themselves, could find such satisfaction in watching a hungry man eat. One day as I was feeding my dog the answer came to me. I love to see dogs, horses, and cats eat; their satisfaction in food is to me a real delight. Now when a woman sees a man eating I suppose it affects her in just that way.

One of the distinct differences between a man and a woman is that a man can always eat. If a woman has passed through tragedy, or acute mental suffering, or is highly excited, or terribly depressed, she cares nothing for food. But a man will never omit a meal. He can and will eat under any and all circumstances. Oscar Wilde expressed a truth when, at a fashionable

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dinner-party, he exclaimed: "How nice it is to be eating again!"

To return to book-hunger and its satisfaction, there is no better specimen of librarians in America than Edmund Lester Pearson, of the New York Public Library. I do not believe he could be dull if he tried. He has recently published a tall volume, which I unhesitatingly recommend to all lovers of good reading, and to all persons with a well-developed sense of humour. It is called *Books in Black or Red*, and is profusely and appropriately illustrated. Admirable anecdotes abound. The conscious and unconscious humour of by-gone days revisits the glimpses of the moon. The old-fashioned formal treatises on the training of daughters are pleasantly compared with the manners of the present generation. "Not many months ago I read a speech by an English bishop about the manners of to-day. He said that he tried not to be an old-fashioned parent, and yet when his daughter said to him, 'I say, Old Egg, got any cigarettes?' he thought things had gone rather far."

Mr. Pearson speaks kindly of the magazines that made radiant the days of his childhood, and I agree with him that there was never anything quite so good as *Our Young Folks*. I also read every word of the English *Chatterbox*, nor can I forget the wonderful story of those two organisations at school, the *Union Jacks* and the *Brickbats*. Unfortunately for myself, I decided at the age of six to transplant these two societies

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from the English school to the grade school I attended in America; not content with this initial error, I made the further mistake of taking the *Union Jacks* for myself, and allowing one of my antagonists to use the name *Brickbats*. I should have known that such a name had a thousand times more advertising power than *Union Jacks*. I found it out on the afternoon of the first day, when the two companies met after school to have a free fight. The *Union Jacks* numbered about fourteen and the *Brickbats* at least three hundred. The charge of the Three Hundred (and they charged as soon as they saw us) was so terrifying that I regret to say the *Union Jacks* unanimously ran in the same direction, and judging by the excellent start made by some of them I think they are running yet.

There is one unpardonable omission in Mr. Pearson's delightful book, unpardonable because the author is a librarian. It has no index.

What a magnificent building is the New York Public Library, and what a superb site! I remember the old reservoir. What a happy change from that which satisfies the thirst of the body to that which satisfies the thirst of the mind!

My remarks about my own and other men's ignorance of flowers called forth, as I hoped and believed it would, keen discussion and sharp dissent. In "Jim" Borland's column, in the Franklin and Oil City *News-Herald* for 31 March, I am justly rebuked. He says my education has

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been sadly neglected. Now it is not the fault of my teachers, it is my own stupidity. I love the bright faces of flowers, and I have a glorious summer garden; but although I am told every day that this is cosmos, to-morrow I am sure to think it is candy-tuft. I cried out in joy over the superb lilacs; but she, after agreeing in their superbity, informed me they were wistaria. "Jim" writes: "I'll wager that almost every man knows Peonies, Gladioli, Dahlias, Golden Glow, and Cosmos when he sees either growing in a garden." It is lucky for "Jim" that I am not a betting man. I shall, however, take advantage of his printed invitation to visit some day the gardens in his home town.

"Jim" adds: "The distinguished man who told Mr. Phelps that 'if no flowers at all came up in the spring, he would be unaware of their absence,' made a confession of which he should be ashamed."

I am not sure that we should be ashamed of any confessions; it is rather the things we don't confess of which we should be ashamed. But I submitted the damning sentence to the distinguished man, whose name I will not hand down to infamy. He writes:

"This newspaper man brands me as I deserve. But in fact when my attention is called to the presence of flowers I often admire them, but not always. I like the sweet pea and adore pansies, but I detest above all things the mawkish, ema-

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ciated, anæmic, white lily which everybody gives to every one else at this season. I hate its thin stalk; the few, miserable leaves which look as if they grew on the north coast of Iceland. And then the china cup which is called a flower; bah! it reeks of poverty and disease. Flowers ought to be rich, magnificent. They express the abundance, the generosity of nature. One wants a tub full of roses, or pansies, or anemones, or violets, which are like the full flood of a nightingale's song. This lily is only one feeble note, a solitary monotonous chirp.

"Yet the true enthusiast, the lover of wild flowers, is their deadliest foe. His highest pleasure is to detect some rare bloom (how I hate that word when used as a noun!) to pull it up by the roots, to lay it on the floor of his carry-all, *i. e.*, motor-car, and to let it die there. That is what he calls the love of flowers and he sniffs at you and me, who are merely agnostics in the matter of horticulture."

In a later issue of the *News-Herald*, 7 April, "Jim" writes: "I guess William Lyon Phelps, Editor of *Scribner's Magazine* [the only compliment he pays me] started something when he made his observation recently about the ignorance of men in regard to flowers." Well, that is exactly what I aimed to accomplish. He publishes a letter from Madison Cooper, who says that he has "taken twenty names at random from the State of Ohio and twenty names at random from the State of Connecticut, both outside the big cities, and finds that only twelve out

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of the forty are female names." More men than women doubtless are in the flower *business*. I had in mind private gardens. Men are so constituted that they will make money out of anything, even out of flowers; I am yet more hardened and callous, for I make money out of literature.

The latest book about flowers is a particularly charming one, and I recommend it cordially, both to "Jim," Madison Cooper, and the twenty-eight male flower-growers of Ohio and Connecticut. This is called *Garden Whimsies*, and is written by Mrs. C. B. Lomas, of Springfield, Massachusetts. She not only knows all about flowers and gardens, but knows how to write about them. Her charming, witty, and original chapters make excellent and stimulating reading.

No better poet of flowers can be found than old Robert Herrick, who lived in Devonshire three hundred years ago. His *Hesperides* is a flower-garden in verse, the poems being as delicate and lovely as the flowers themselves.

When the Elizabethan poet Tom Campion tried to think of a metaphor that would fitly describe the beauty of a woman's face, he had the inspiration to think of a garden.

"There is a garden in her face,
Where roses and white lilies grow:
A heavenly paradise is that place,
Wherein all pleasant fruits do flow:
There cherries grow that none may buy,
Till 'Cherry-Ripe' themselves do cry.

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Those cherries fairly do enclose
Of orient pearls a double row,
Which when her lovely laughter shows,
They look like rose-buds filled with snow:
Yet them no peer nor prince may buy,
Till 'Cherry-Ripe' themselves do cry."

Under the direction of Mengelberg, the New York Philharmonic Society played the Ninth Symphony twice, on April 12 and 15. I was there both times. No year should ever pass without its being performed, this greatest of all orchestra compositions. Where voices cannot be obtained there is no reason why the symphony should not be played up to the choral part. This was done with success a few years ago by the New Haven Symphony Orchestra, and I am pleased to see by a programme just received from San Francisco, that on February 23 and 25 the local orchestra, directed by our old friend, Alfred Hertz, played the first three movements. An explanatory note appeared on the printed programme, stating that there was no room in any San Francisco theatre available for both chorus and orchestra. To me the most beautiful passage in Beethoven is the movement in the Ninth Symphony immediately following the *adagio molto e cantabile*, called *andante moderato* and given to the second violins. The only man who ever agreed with me about this was Philippe Marcou, who used to teach Romance Languages at Harvard.

On the whole, the chorus in Mengelberg's per-

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formance, from the Schola Cantorum, did the best singing I have ever heard in the Ninth Symphony. They were magnificent. The quartette was poor, though it should be remembered the music assigned to the solos and quartette is almost unsingable; still if it cannot be adequately sung there is no particular reason why it should be gargled. It had been a severe winter, and I am sure many in the audience were reminded of their own efforts to cure colds.

Those of us who are not professional musicians need not feel too much humiliation when, after hearing a singer and enjoying the performance, we are told by some one having authority that she sang off the pitch. For the benefit of those who have often had their pleasure ruined and their self-esteem shattered by this remark, I will tell the following strictly true story. Years ago, Madame Calvé came to New Haven and sang in grand opera; some days later I expressed my satisfaction to a professional musician who said: "She sang sharp all the evening; singers frequently commit this fault when appearing in a small theatre." I accepted this statement deferentially until I met another professional musician who commented in general terms on the performance. "But," said I, "Blank says that all the evening Calvé sang off the pitch." "He is quite right," came the reply. "She constantly flatted."

No one, not even a critic, can know everything; and it is best always to confess ignorance

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where knowledge is lacking. The foremost pianist in the world told me that every now and then he would play another piece than the one on the programmes, and that frequently the professional critic would in his review disclose the fact that he was unaware of the substitution. How little any of us knows for certain about anything; how easily we can be deceived! After spending his entire life on the Norman Conquest of England, Freeman was wrong about the battle of Hastings.

The death of H. E. Krehbiel, musical critic of the New York *Tribune*, removes one of the famous quartette who have for so long acted in this capacity for the Metropolitan Press. The others are: Richard Aldrich of *The Times*, W. J. Henderson of *The Herald*, Henry T. Finck of *The Evening Post*; and I admire also the work of Max Smith. These men have been a public blessing. I do not believe any city in the world can show abler musical critics. They have always been honest, incorruptible, sincere; and their very positiveness has been a sign of sincerity and a stimulation to the appreciation of good music. Mr. Krehbiel was a man of violent prejudices, but also of vast knowledge, and he was extremely careful to be accurate in matters of fact. In addition to his daily work on the *Tribune*, extending over forty years, he published a number of valuable and important books. His popular work, *How to Listen to Music*, has helped

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in the education of thousands of ticket-buyers; his last and most monumental achievement was the preparation of Thayer's vast *Life of Beethoven*, an important contribution to history, biography, and art.

I am glad that Lawrence Gilman has been chosen for the post on *The Tribune* made vacant by the death of Mr. Krehbiel. Mr. Gilman is a thoroughly competent musical critic; he is also a literary critic who must be reckoned with; and as a writer of Notes for Programmes he has for years delighted readers by his wit and humour, and his capacity to relate Music to Life. It is a fine thing for the cause to know that we can now read Lawrence Gilman day by day, instead of occasionally; for he is the kind of writer who day by day in every way grows better and better.

I not only take the *Tribune*, *Times*, *Herald*, *World*, and *Post* in order to see what the critics of music and drama are saying; I take that weekly, *Musical America*, and I advise every one who loves music to do the same. It is surprising that John C. Freund can, in *Mephisto's Musings*, be so chronically interesting on all subjects.

Beethoven's Ninth Symphony was first performed on 7 May 1824, and the centennial next year should be commemorated everywhere in the world by a gala production of the work. Every endowed and municipal orchestra should render the work in whole or in part. At the original

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performance the composer was present, though he could hear neither the music nor the applause. One of the reasons why a deaf man wrote the greatest music ever known is because he heard it all in his mind, and was not interrupted by street noises or any other sounds. He could compose a whole movement, secure in the knowledge that no discordant invasion could check or distract the steady flow of his genius. Was there ever a finer illustration of the words of Keats? "Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter."

Perhaps if civilisation continues to advance, it will reach such a point that in order to concentrate we shall have to become deaf.

One of the best American historical romances I have read in years is *Blowing Weather*, by J. McIntyre. This is a thrilling amphibious novel of Philadelphia in the last decade of the eighteenth century, when Citizen Genêt made his notorious excursion to our shores. The book is replete with incident and is as artistic and well-written as though the author had nothing to say. It makes a double appeal through its stirring scenes and excellent literary style. At that time, by the way, President Washington, just because of our friendship with France, and because she had so recently been our ally, did not feel it necessary to support her in all her undertakings.

A good many letters come to me every day;

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out of every ten there are seven which have the envelopes carefully licked up to the extreme corners, so that in opening them I cut my fingers, break my nails, and often tear the contents into shreds before I can reach them. It is not in the least necessary that every or any envelope should be hermetically gummed; the letter itself does not require an air-tight enclosure. The superfluous mucilage that the lickerman absorbs into his system by this method must make him taste his letters long after they are on their journey; while the recipient's time, energy, and character are wasted. It will be an act of mercy to do less licking.

Of course you will say, "Why don't you have a steel implement to open the envelopes?" I have, but I can never find it when I want it. At all other times it thrusts itself upon my attention like an undesirable citizen.

Likewise when individuals—not publishers—send me books, they come wrapped in four or five suits of paper, frequently tied up three times, so that when I finally reach the heart of the matter and extract the precious volume from its series of wrappings, I am exhausted and the floor of my room looks as if I had unpacked a grand piano. All that is necessary in sending a book is to shove it stark naked into a paper envelope with a wire clasp, the entire operation taking five seconds. The book never suffers. A few months ago I pushed a book in that fashion into a Columbian Clasp envelope, sent it to an

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address in London, and it came back to me, my English friend being not at home. The book had taken two voyages across the Atlantic and two train trips; it came out of the envelope as fresh as a baby.

I have been reading Zona Gale's *Faint Perfume*, with the accent on the second syllable. The case of Zona Gale is extremely interesting. Like George F. Babbitt, she is a graduate of a State University. But she caught it, while apparently he was immune. She began her career by writing a few sentimental novels, which, except in intermittent flashes, gave no hint of the true flame in her soul. Then, without any preliminary flourishes, in the year 1919 she produced a novel significantly called *Birth*, which signalled her own. There is no suspicion of sentimentality; the story is written with austere dignity, and she might honestly have placed the motto on the title-page which Guy de Maupassant put on his first and best novel—*l'humble vérité*. Fine as *Birth* is, it attracted little attention; but in its composition Zona Gale had attained mastery; for in the next year, 1920, she produced *Miss Lulu Bett*, which is remarkable in many ways, but chiefly in this: in a short book she accomplished perfectly what most of her contemporaries failed to do in five times the space. The outline of *Miss Lulu Bett* is like a Greek statue, in its economy, severity, and restrained beauty. The life and career of the un-

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fortunate Lulu are completely set before the reader, not by the multiplication of details, but by what is emphasised and by what is omitted. Such a novel is interesting in content, and beautiful to contemplate. Three years later, with the same method—the method of selection and omission—she repeats her success. *Faint Perfume* is the best American novel I have thus far read in 1923. I smell only one danger; in her extreme care not to print a single sentence until it has been hammered, carved, and filed she may possibly fall into the pit which Henry James eventually reached. It would be sad if she should lose the capacity of saying a simple thing in a simple way.

But *Faint Perfume* would be an honour to any living writer; with so many novels loosely constructed and slovenly written, *Faint Perfume* looks as if it had been made not by a pen, but by a chisel.

It is pleasant to see a man who is big enough to change his mind. Years ago Bernard Shaw made the following epigram: "He who can do, does; he who cannot, teaches." Max Farrand calls my attention to Shaw's Preface to the *W. E. A. Education Yearbook* (1918): "And it may very well follow that a good deal of the most helpful teaching will still be done by academic persons who know the nature of the science without special skill in its operations; indeed, without any skill except in thought. This, by the way, is the best answer to my famous gibe, 'He who

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can, does; he who cannot, teaches.' . . . 'He who can do, does; he who can think, teaches' is just as true as the other formula."

In the New York *Evening Post* for 25 April 1923, under the heading "Declares Snobbism Hurts Music Here," there is a press despatch from Chicago in which a lady, who is Chairman of the Opera in Our Language Foundation, is quoted as saying: "There is patriotism in art, or there is no patriotism at all." I dissent from this statement; patriotism has no more to do with art than it has with food. During the war there were many who refused to hear Wagner's music, while taking into their patriotic bodies German medicines. They rightly regarded their bodies as more important than their minds. The lady proceeds: "We as a nation have a language; we have . . . more than seventy American operas fit for hearing in any opera house in this country and to have them banished from companies incorporated in the United States is an injustice every true-hearted American should resent." I forbear to comment on such a statement, for it seems to me it answers itself with overwhelming power.

I knew that my remarks on "aint" in the issue for May would call out a flood of letters; it is a tidal wave. A correspondent from Seymour, Connecticut, cleverly suggests that we take the three words "am not I," elide the "m" and "o,"

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with the result "a'n't I?" Now pronounce this residuum as you ought to pronounce the word "can't." Webster damns it, says my correspondent, as "colloquial" and "illiterate," but she wisely adds, "A little use would soon fix that."

Which leads me to two reflexions. First, that words, unlike some other things, rise in beauty by use. Second, is not perhaps "a'n't I?" the original of the corruption "aren't I?" Just as that glorious phrase, *Welsh Rabbit*, has been absurdly and affectedly corrupted into *Welsh Rarebit*.

Another correspondent suggests instead of "aren't I," some such expression as "isn't it so?" or "I am a little late, I fear." But after due consideration, I think there is the same objection that rules out "am I not?" It is too formal for intimate conversation.

A college professor writes: "Another expression which I find even more annoying because more commonly heard is 'sell the idea.'" He cannot possibly despise this vulgarism more than I do. It is nauseating.

My comparison of Stewart's novel *Valley Waters* to a Hood River apple brought a magnificent protest from a man in Virginia, who asks: "Why Hood River? Haven't you ever heard of our Virginia Winesaps? I am sending you a box in order to prove that they are just as good as those from the West." They are cer-

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tainly fine. The incident reminds me that lately I ate a marvellous slice of York Ham. I wonder if there is anywhere in the world such ham as York Ham?

XII

THIS week I have been in South Dakota. The reason why I was excited at entering South Dakota was because it was the only State in the Union which I had not seen, and I wished to add this jewel to my crown. When the train paused at Millbank, the first stop in the State, I sprang to the ground, seized a handful of soil, and shouted SOUTH DAKOTA! For years I had longed for that moment, as I did not wish to die until I had been in every State in my country. (Nor do I wish to die now.) A few hours later I reached the town of Aberdeen, the end of my journey. Here I gave three lectures in the State Normal School, an admirable institution with an exceedingly able President and a body of devoted teachers. The young men and maidens come from isolated farms, and receive culture and inspiration. *Scribner's Magazine* enters many households, and when at the end of my lectures I gave the audience an opportunity to ask questions, I was kept busy for an hour, and quit only because I had to return East. The questions displayed an interest in and a familiarity with the most "modern" of modern novels, essays, and plays. Aberdeen is a town on the prairie, and from the front door of the house where I was delightfully entertained, I gazed twenty miles into the sunset, with no building, tree, or hill to break the view.

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The whole journey was interesting. I left New Haven on a Thursday noon, attended a matinée of the New York Theatre Guild and saw Bernard Shaw's *The Devil's Disciple*—a splendid play splendidly staged and acted. The picture of the parson's wife and the young Disciple at tea in the old Colonial room was so beautiful that it "haunts me still." I caught the five o'clock train for Detroit, arriving early Friday morning. I played golf there all day (35 holes), and that evening addressed 350 bankers at the banquet of the Detroit Bankers Club. Saturday morning I played another round of golf, and caught the noon train for Chicago; and from there the night train for Aberdeen, arriving Sunday evening. Monday morning was spent in golf on the prairie course and after lecturing Monday afternoon, evening, and Tuesday morning I caught the noon train East. I arrived at New Haven about one o'clock Thursday, played four sets of tennis that afternoon and in the evening addressed the Connecticut Medical Society at their annual banquet.

"Fie upon this quiet life! I want work."

On the train I read through seven books, of which the worst was Arnold Bennett's *How to Make the Best of Life*. No one who praises this work should ever breathe a word against Doctor Frank Crane. Compared to this collection of platitudes, Doctor Crane is as paradoxical and unexpected as Chesterton. The Doctor's stock is rising fast; the Theatre Guild has a

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long commendation from him on its programmes.

With all this golf and speaking and reading, it is possible that some reader may believe there was no time for meditation, no time for sober thought. He would be deceived. It is curious that people say railway corporations have no sense of humour, when I spent four nights on what they call a sleeping-car. I had and used abundance of time for the sessions of sweet silent thought.

The morning in Dakota I played golf, I stood in the vast circle of the horizon, as complete as the circle of the sea. One of the printed rules I transcribe: "Ball lying in gopher hole may be lifted without penalty." I am thinking of writing a book on golf. I shall call it *Thirty Years of Looking Up*.

It was a heavenly May morning; there were many wild flowers, and the air was vocal with singing birds. I was glad to see a pair of my old friends, the upland plovers (*Bartramian Sand-piper*), who trilled their incomparable song, and lifted their wings above their pretty heads with an inimitable gesture. I can easily understand how those who have lived in Aberdeen would, if transported elsewhere, be homesick for the prairie.

Speaking of the plovers reminds me again of W. H. Hudson, who wrote of these birds so affectionately. Eight or nine volumes of the beautiful, limited, complete edition of his works have

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appeared during the past month, and I counsel those who love the writings of Hudson to secure a set of these books before they are gone. They are in every way admirable specimens of the publisher's art, a fine frame for Hudson's pictures of life.

The most notable literary event of the year 1923 is the visit to America of Joseph Conrad. In contrast to almost all others, he came, not to be seen but to see. His novels are characterised by such dignity and reserve and austerity that I imagined he might be rather unapproachable. Nothing could be farther from the truth. One would naturally expect simplicity in so sincere an artist, but I was quite unprepared for his winsome amenity. He is one of the most lovable men I have ever known, and his personality in conversation leaves as indelible an impression as his books. I shall never cease to be grateful to my friend Henry Canby, the accomplished editor of the "Literary Review" of the New York *Evening Post*, who, some twenty years ago, insisted on my reading Conrad's novels. Of these, I still place first *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, and I do not wonder that the author is willing to have his fame stand or fall by that book. But to those who have never read Conrad, I recommend their beginning with *Typhoon*, the best description of a storm at sea I have ever found—nor can one forget the practical, unimaginative captain, who conquered the elements because he had no more self-consciousness than they.

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Joseph Conrad is the finest illustration of a remark I made in the May issue, namely, that it is possible to attain complete fluency in English without pronouncing it accurately. A real sensation was to hear this distinguished English author read a page of his own writing. The foreign accent was so strong that it was astounding to remember that the man who was pronouncing English words so strangely has, in mastery of the English language, no superior in the world. That Conrad should understand the composition of a novel, the construction of the plot, the presentation and analysis of human character, that the work should be filled with the evidences of original thought and vivid imagination, all this is comprehensible; but his chief title to fame is seen in the nobility, flexibility, and general perfection of his English prose style. The standards of competition in England are high; that he should hold an undisputed place in the front rank of living English writers is phenomenal.

Even so, the man is greater than his books. To read him is to admire him; to meet him is to have that admiration deepen, with the addition of affection. He is an extraordinary personality.

The committee selected by Columbia University to award the Pulitzer prize in American drama for the season of 1922-1923 had an unusually interesting year, there being a number of American plays that in some past periods would have won easily. The choice of *Icebound*, by

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Owen Davis, seems to me particularly wise, because I was on the committee. It is an original, vital, wholly American comedy, and in other respects conforms to the conditions distinctly set down by the donor. It is worth remembering that in the June *Bookman*, which reached me this morning, John Farrar hazarded the prediction that *Icebound* would win. It was a good prophecy, for unlike most prophecies it seems good after the event. The award of the Biography prize to Burton J. Hendrick, for his *Life of Walter H. Page*, has met, as it deserved to, with universal approval. It is pleasant to see Mr. Hendrick gradually receiving recognition for his talents and devotion to truth. The Novel and Drama awards were naturally not so generally commended, nor would they have been had any other novel or drama been chosen. Every objector has his own favourite in these broad and diversified fields.

Men and women equally share in the four literary awards: Burton Hendrick and Owen Davis in biography and drama; Edna St. Vincent Millay and Willa Cather in poetry and fiction. America may well be proud of the four.

All persons except hopelessly reactionary "patriots" will rejoice that the prize for the best editorial of the year was given to William Allen White, of Emporia, Kansas, for his magnificent defence of free speech in the short leader called *To an Anxious Friend*. Here it is:

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"You tell me that law is above freedom of utterance. And I reply that you can have no wise laws nor free enforcement of wise laws unless there is free expression of the wisdom of the people—and, alas, their folly with it. But if there is freedom, folly will die of its own poison, and the wisdom will survive. That is the history of the race. It is the proof of man's kinship with God. You say that freedom of utterance is not for time of stress, and I reply with the sad truth that only in time of stress is freedom of utterance in danger. . . . Whoever pleads for justice helps to keep the peace; and whoever tramples upon the plea of justice, temperately made in name of peace, only outrages peace and kills something fine in the heart of man which God put there when we got our manhood. When that is killed, brute meets brute on each side of the line.

"So, dear friend, put fear out of your heart. This nation will survive, this State will prosper, the orderly business of life will go forward if only men can speak in whatever way given them to utter what their hearts hold—by voice, by posted card, by letter, or by press. Reason never has failed men. Only force and repression have made the wrecks in the world."

We ought to respect the law, but the legislators should not make it difficult to do so. What a difference there is between sin and the law! I have no respect for sin, but I have profound respect for many sinners. On the other hand, I have profound respect for the law, but none at all for many lawmakers. The tyrannical con-

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trol of the individual's habits, manners, speech, and thought has reached such a pitch that before long the "paramount issue" in America may come to be Individual Freedom. For there can be no national freedom, any more than there can be national happiness; these affairs concern only the individual. How happy Germany might have been if she had not filled so large a place in modern history!

That ordinary laws are sufficient to restrain vicious stage-plays became evident in the recent legal decision against a drama produced in New York. Censorship will never be necessary if the laws against obscenity and indecency are properly enforced. It is curious that those who ridicule plays for "teaching a moral lesson," insisting that didacticism is contrary to rules of art, are the ones who most loudly insist that a book or play attacked for indecency "teaches a great moral lesson." Cant.

One of the most interesting books of the year is Werner's *Life of P. T. Barnum*. It is safe to say that Barnum will never be forgotten, and whenever his name is mentioned both speaker and hearer smile, not with contempt, but with a compound of humour and affection. He was a public benefactor, and I gaze with unconcealed respect at his statue in the park at Bridgeport. His enterprise in bringing Jenny Lind to America, which is told with detail by Mr. Werner, was an international event of such magnitude

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that Browning alludes to both persons in *Mr. Sludge, the Medium*, the one poem of its author's filled with American colour. Browning mentions Barnum as he mentions the immortal prize-fight between Tom Sayers and Bill Heenan, the "Benicia Boy." Barnum was forever doing the unexpected. He who had been identified with so many swindles, in the case of Jenny Lind gave the public the full worth of their money. She was even greater than the advertisements. Of all the men and women who sang before I was born, she is the one I would choose to hear. Her "goodness" was a tremendous asset, as it was in the case of Mary Anderson; but virtue alone is no more sufficient to give an artist permanent renown than is the absence of it.

As a rule Barnum knew the American public loved to be gulled. It was a shame *not* to take the money. His genius—for he was a man of genius—consisted in knowing exactly how to swindle them. He swindled them in a way that called forth their admiration, affection, and delight. When I was a small boy in New Haven, one of the side-shows in his circus advertised "a cherry-coloured cat," which you must pay extra to see. No one had ever heard of such a phenomenon, and accordingly crowds streamed into the tent. What they saw was an ordinary black cat, a common enough sight on any street. "What does this mean?" they enquired of the attendant; receiving the dry answer, "Some

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cherries are black." Now Barnum had accurately known in advance exactly what would happen. Instead of becoming enraged and demanding their money back, they all grinned foolishly, ejaculated the then equivalent of "Stung again!" and immediately went out and implored every one they met on no account to miss seeing the cherry-coloured cat. The result was an enormous intake of the people's money. In this case I happened to know the cat. It lived in a house at the corner of York and Chapel Streets, and I had often stroked it. The day before the circus reached town, the cat disappeared. The day after, the cat was returned to the house, with a ribbon around its neck, bearing a card, "With Mr. Barnum's compliments." So that his "overhead" was nil. Every cent he took in was as "velvet" as the cat's fur.

My friend, John Rodemeyer, the cyclopaedic editor of a newspaper in Greenwich, Connecticut, knows an infinite number of stories about Barnum, many of which have illuminated his journal. Barnum was as unique a figure in comedy as Abraham Lincoln in tragedy, and both were purely and wholly American; they could not have flourished in any other country. Both too have become legendary heroes. I—*moi qui parle*—saw Barnum. At a certain moment during the progress of the greatest show on earth, there was an impressive silence. In the midst of this vast silence, the large bulk of the Showman moved majestically to the centre of the ring,

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turned around once slowly, so that all could behold his face, and as majestically departed. He remained exactly the right number of seconds. His benevolent features had an amazingly unctuous expression—but little did we then know how absolutely aware he was, of himself, of his expression, and of the spectators.

Apart from his genius for guessing, I find his physical vitality no less astounding. When we remember what hardships he endured on the road, what reverses of fortune he suffered, enough to shatter a less indomitable spirit, when we remember his working for weeks with little sleep, and the wretched cold food he ate in impossible conditions, the fact that he lived to be over eighty must be reckoned among his achievements.

Another distinctively American biography of the present year is Edward W. Bok's *Life of Cyrus H. K. Curtis*, called *A Man from Maine*. Barnum revelled in humbug, and rejoiced when his enemies attacked him for it. In the career of Mr. Curtis there is exactly the opposite of humbug, for he always gave full value, being even fanatically honest. This volume is not so rich in anecdote, nor so dramatic in events as the *Americanization of Edward Bok*, but it is immensely interesting. It shows not only the rise from obscurity to prominence, and the reasons therefor, but it breathes the very poetry of "business." It successfully demonstrates that

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there need be nothing humdrum, nothing mechanical about a business career. It may be full of the spirit of romance and adventure. After all, this depends, in the last analysis, on the individual. Those who find a business life "dull" would have probably found a professional career equally so. Some are bored by work, some by play, some by mountains, some by the sea, some by the plains, some by humanity, and some by themselves. Happy are those who can look on every morning with fresh eyes.

Brigadier-General Henry Martyn Robert, U. S. A., died at Hornell, New York, on May 11. He was eighty-six years old. He was the author of a popular and useful book, and had a long and distinguished military and scientific career. I wonder how many of the thousands of men and women who have been faithful to Robert's *Rules of Order* for the last forty years knew anything about the author. He was one of the oldest living graduates of West Point. He served in the Civil War, was President of the United States Board of Engineers for Fortifications, was a member of the New York Harbor Line Board, and of the Rock Creek Park National Commission, and in 1907 was consulting engineer for the construction of the bridge and causeway connecting Galveston with the mainland. His services to his country both in war and in peace were numerous and important; but he will popularly be remembered longest because of his

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standard work on parliamentary law. When William Dwight and I organised the Hartford Public High School Debating Club in 1882 we decided that Robert's *Rules of Order* should determine our procedure. The club is still flourishing, and I dare say uses the same manual. It is unfortunate that more men and women are not familiar with parliamentary law. Over and over again I have seen men called to the chair in some public meeting, and immediately display painful incompetence. The best presiding officer I ever saw in action was the late John M. Hall, who as Speaker of the Connecticut House of Representatives maintained absolute discipline, was invariably courteous and invariably right, never guessed inaccurately at a viva voce vote, never heard an appeal from his decision but once, and then had the satisfaction of being supported by an overwhelming majority.

Speaking of West Point, I have been reading Arthur Sherburne Hardy's autobiography, called *Things Remembered*, which has just been published. I confidently recommend this book to all intelligent men and women. Every page is interesting, and there are many enlivening anecdotes. I was particularly glad to see his admiration for the system of education at West Point, of which institution he is one of the most notable graduates. I have had opportunities for observing that system, and I believe in it. Thanks to the discipline, to the small divisions, where

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every pupil recites every day, and to the liberal course of study, every graduate of West Point and of Annapolis is an educated man. I have not met one exception. I shall never forget the good times I had at West Point some years ago, when I made weekly visits there. The conversation of such men as Hugh Scott, Charles Larned, and Edward Holden was an education in itself. Doctor Holden, who had been astronomer at the Lick Observatory, President of the University of California, and was then Librarian of the United States Military Academy, was a most interesting man. The immense range of his knowledge and information, his keen wit and spontaneous humour, his prodigious mental vitality, made him an ideal conversationalist. Shortly before his death he quoted to me the famous verses of Landor, and although the first line was no more true of Holden than it was of the author, the poem, cited by him, seemed doubly impressive:

“I strove with none, for none was worth my strife.
Nature I loved, and next to Nature, Art.
I warmed both hands before the fire of Life:
It sinks, and I am ready to depart.”

Mr. Hardy's last chapter on religion is frank and sincere. Yet it seems a little strange to me that because knowledge of religious truth cannot be proven, he should find it necessary to take no attitude at all. If we were to subscribe only to what can be verified, no intelligent man

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would cast a vote at any political election, choose any career in life, believe in his friends, or work for his country.

In a previous paper I chronicled the fact that the American poet Anna Hempstead Branch had read the entire Bible through in a few days. To those who are interested I give the following facts communicated to me in a letter from the Reverend M. L. G. Proper, of Long Hill, Connecticut, who, on 16 March 1923, read the New Testament through in one day. He will be glad to hear from other students who may have performed this feat, for feat it surely is.

"I did not begin to read at midnight, although I am sure that I had the correct time, but waited until one minute past midnight so that if I succeeded in my attempt the reading would certainly all have been done in one day. I began at 12.01 A. M., Friday, March 16, 1923, and at 8.25 in the evening I had read the entire text of the English Revised New Testament.

"Note that I had read only the text of the Revised Version of the New Testament and, that there might not be any question as to my having read the Revised Version of the New Testament, I then read the footnotes in 1 hour 48 minutes; and the chapter outlines at the top of the pages in 26½ minutes. It was now 11.30 P. M.

"I slept less than 1 hour during the 24 hours that had just passed. It would be the same as if one got up at 7 o'clock in the morning and worked until 7 o'clock the next morning with only one

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hour's sleep during that time. I drank freely of water during the entire 24 hours. I had no physical trouble of any kind; not even as respects the eyes or the head. It was a very, very rainy day, raining hard almost all of the time. And the dark day seemed to be most excellent for reading. At 11.30 I wanted to go out for an hour's walk (exercise) but did not, because the country roads were so muddy. I was not tired; but felt as good as if it were morning and I had had a night's rest. I went to bed at 12.05 A. M. Saturday morning. There was no physical reaction from what I had done.

"The reading was a rapid non-meditative one. But occasionally a verse, a paragraph, or a group of chapters would stand out as especially important.

"This is the important fact: the entire text of the English Revised Version of the New Testament was read in one day in 15 hours 14 $\frac{1}{4}$ minutes.

"I find that the words of Jesus in the New Testament, including the repetitions of various passages, can be read in 3 hours 11 minutes.

"I have read the Old Testament 9 times. This includes the Authorised Version, the Revised Version, and the Jewish translation. I have read the New Testament 20 times. This includes the Authorised Version, the Revised Version, the 1911 New Testament, and Moffatt's translation. There are a number of translations in English that I have not read, as the Catholic Bible, the Modern Reader's Bible, the Baptist Bible, The 1911 Old Testament, the Twentieth Century New Testament, and Weymouth's

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translation of the New Testament. I suppose there are others.

"I should like to know of others who have read the Bible a large number of times, or who have read it rapidly, as I have done."

Behold now a subject that ought to arouse animated discussion and sharp controversy. The famous naturalist, W. H. Hudson, was certain that we cannot remember *smells*. Sights we remember perfectly; any one in the midst of a blizzard, by exercising his memory, can see with the mind's eye last summer's landscape as plainly as if it were actually before him. How well we remember *sounds* would differ with different individuals. Hudson believed that no man could remember *smells*. He thought that the smell itself had to reappear in order to stimulate the senses.

The sense of smell in man is not nearly so strong as the sense of sight. And yet I am not convinced by Hudson's argument. It seems to me—I am willing to admit I may be mistaken—that I can remember the smell of pond-lilies, although I have not held one in my hand for several years. Hudson also says that although unpleasant sights recur to the memory and afflict us, unpleasant smells once survived cannot give us any further trouble, nor does the attempt to recall them bring any disgust. I am by no means sure of this. It is true that although for some days after an operation I was nauseated by the smell of ether, and some months later was

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nearly overcome merely by entering a hospital, I have at this moment completely forgotten the smell of ether, and it gives me therefore not the slightest distress to attempt to recall it. But there used to be a soap-factory near New Haven with a particularly evil odour; and it seems to me now that I can recall that. I think I can remember how my dog smells when he is very wet, although at this moment he is dry; and I am afraid I remember all too well how he smelt when he had succeeded in achieving his highest happiness—rolling in the carcass of a rotten sheep. It is astounding that the dog, whose sense of smell is so enormously superior to that faculty in human beings, should delight in what is to us the intolerable odour of decay.

Hudson, in his book, *Idle Days in Patagonia*. Chapter XIV, says:

“The reason, I imagine, is that while smells are so much to us they cannot, like things seen and things heard, be reproduced in the mind, but are at once forgotten. It is true that in the books smell is classified along with taste, as being much lower or less intellectual than sight and hearing, for the reason (scarcely a valid one) that there must be actual contact of the organ of smell with the object smelt, or a material emanation from, and portion of, such object, although the object itself might be miles away beyond the sight or even beyond the horizon. The light of nature is enough to show how false the arrangement is that places smell and taste

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together, as much lower and widely apart from sight and hearing. Rather the extreme delicacy of the olfactory nerve raises smell to the rank of an intellectual sense, but very little below the two first and higher senses. And yet, while sights and sounds are retained and can be reproduced at will, and their phantasms are like the reality, an odour has no phantasm in the brain; or, to be very exact, the phantasm of an odour, or its presentment or representation, is so faint and quickly gone when any effort is made to recover it, that, compared with the distinct and abiding presentments of sights and sounds, it is as nothing. Imagine, for example, that you had often seen Windsor Castle, and knew a great deal about it, its history, its noble appearance, which will look familiar to you when you see it again and affect you pleasantly as in the past; and that yet you could not see it with the mind's eye, but that when, after a recent visit, you tried to see it mentally, nothing but a formless, dim, whitish patch appeared, only to disappear in an instant and come no more. Such a case would represent our condition with regard to even the strongest and most familiar smells. Yet in spite of our inability to recall them, we do distinctly make the effort; and in the case of some strong odour which we have recently inhaled, the mind mocks us with this faint shadow of a phantasm; and this vain, or almost vain, effort of the mind seems to show that odours in some past period of our history were so much more to us than they are now that they could be vividly reproduced, and that this power has been lost, or, at all events, is so weakened as to be of no use.

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“I find that Bain, who makes different and contradictory statements on this subject in his work on *The Senses and the Intellect*, has the following sentence, with which I agree: ‘By a great effort of the mind, we may approach very near to the recovery of a smell that we have been extremely familiar with, as, for example, the odour of coffee, and if we were more dependent on ideas of smell, we might succeed much better.’ A very big *if*, by the way; but it is probable that some savages, and some individuals among us that have a very acute sense of smell, do succeed much better. This sense being so much more to dogs than to man, it is not strange that they remember smells rather than sights, and can reproduce the sensation of smells, as their twitching and sniffing noses when they dream seem to show.

“This approach in ourselves to the recovery of a strong or familiar smell, this dim white patch, to speak in metaphor, the ghost of a phantasm of a smell, seems to have misled the philosophers into the idea that we can mentally reproduce odours. . . . So indistinct was the reproduction in my own case, even of the smell of coffee, that after reading this passage I began to fear that my own brain had misled me, and so, to satisfy myself on the point, I consulted others, friends and acquaintances, who all began trying to recall the sensations produced on them by the odours they were most familiar with. The result of their efforts has restored my peace of mind. With the exception of two or three ladies, who, having no male relations to make up their minds for them, profess to be still in doubt, all sadly

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acknowledged that they find themselves poorer by one faculty than they had supposed themselves to be; that they began trying to recall smells in the belief that they had the power; that they found that they could almost do it, then began to doubt, and finally with a feeling of impotence, of being baffled, gave it up.

"A simple mental experiment may serve to convince any person who tries it that the sensations of smell do not reproduce themselves in the mind. We think of a rose, or a lily, or a violet, and a feeling of pleasure attends the thought; but that this feeling is caused solely by the image of something beautiful to the eye becomes evident when we proceed to think of some artificial perfume, or extract, or essence of a flower. The extract, we know, gave us far more pleasure than the slight perfume of the flower, but there is no feeling of pleasure in thinking of it; it is nothing more than an idea in the mind. On the other hand, when we remember some extremely painful scene that we have witnessed, or some sound, expressing distress or anguish, that we have heard, something of the distressed feeling experienced at the time is reproduced in us; and it is common to hear people say, It makes me sad, or makes me dizzy, or makes my blood run cold, when I think of it; which is literally true, because in thinking of it they again (in a sense) see and hear it. But to think of evil odours does not affect us at all: we can, in imagination, uncork and sniff at cans of petroleum and saturate our pocket-handkerchiefs with asafoetida or carbolic acid, or walk behind a dust-cart, or wade through miles of fetid slime in some tropical

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morass, or take up some mephitic animal, like the skunk, and fondle it as we would a kitten, yet experience no pain, and no sensation of nausea."

I rejoice that George Santayana has at last consented to collect and publish his poems in one volume. He is so well-known as a professional philosopher and as a prose essayist that many have forgotten the poems he wrote in his youth. Some of them are extremely beautiful; and I regard his Sonnets as particularly fine. They first appeared in 1894, and were the fruit of the decade extending from 1883, when he was a freshman at Harvard, to 1893, when he was a member of the Faculty. At last we have his *Poems, Selected by the Author and Revised*, an attractive volume of one hundred and thirty-five pages, with a charming preface.

These verses, in my judgment, belong to literature; and here is a question—Do they belong to American or to English literature? The author is a full-blooded Spaniard, but as he came to America at the age of nine, learned English here, and wrote most of his poems here, I think we must claim him as an American poet. I also insist that W. H. Hudson is an American writer, because his father and mother were both Americans, born in the United States. It is true that Hudson wrote all his books in England—but does that fact alone make him an Englishman? Patriotism has nothing to do with art, yet I

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think the classification of Santayana and Hudson as American writers can be justified, even as there is not the slightest doubt that Joseph Conrad belongs to the literature of England.

I am mildly shocked to observe in two books by reputable authors an apparent ignorance of the difference between *counsel* and *council*. In Nathaniel W. Stephenson's excellent *Life of Lincoln*, page 208, I find this sentence: "As associate council in a case at Cincinnati three years before, Lincoln had been treated so contemptuously by Stanton that he had returned home in pained humiliation." In Ludwig Lewisohn's *Up Stream*, page 32, I read: "Though his life had been, however rash and foolish, of an unblemished honor, he counselled my mother to secrecy. She blamed herself bitterly in later years for having followed his council."

One of my correspondents wishes me to insist on the proper distinction between "latest" and "last." I wish we could, but upon reflexion I find that good usage has so sanctioned the words as synonyms that it will be impossible to put through a reform. Every one knows the gibe: "Have you read my last book?" "I hope so." The distinction would have saved the author from that humiliation. Yet we find one of the greatest of Browning's poems called *My Last Duchess*. Now so far from being the last, the Duke is talking about her to the envoy who is arranging for a successor. I surrender.

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I also surrender on the question of *n'est-ce pas*. Carolyn Wells and I have organised the *am't I* club, of which we are the original charter members. We have decided to say *am't I* brazenly, and then glare. We invite all respectable persons and others to join in the *am't I* "drive," in an attempt to "sell it," or to "put it over." Perhaps if we can get "in touch" with some influential persons, we can make some progress "along these lines." I would say *a'n't I*, but it sounds too much like *aren't I*, and all except those from the Middle West might think I was using that detestable phrase.

One of the worst foes to human happiness is the fresh-air crank. I love fresh air as much as anybody, but I love it where it belongs—outdoors. I do not like too much of it in the house, and I particularly hate the mixture of in-and-outdoor air, because the ingredients are never correctly amalgamated. I hate a wind blowing across a library-table, and I hate a draught down the back of my neck. One of my grievances against the fresh-air crank is that he has a positive genius for the inopportune. Just when I am absolutely comfortable in a warm interior on a winter day, and can laugh from my security at the accursed cold, some crank is sure to say: "Don't you think it is very close here?" He walks across the room and opens a window on the back of my neck, letting in the poisonous chill. For the invariable fact is, that in a public meeting

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or anywhere else the fresh-air crank always opens the window on somebody else's back. He then returns to his safe chair, and smiles, and says: "That's better." I remember once when this happened, a friend of mine remarked that we had been absolutely comfortable until this idiot opened the window. He emphatically closed it, and added: "I've got only one drop of blood in my whole body, and I want that to circulate."

When you are travelling on a railway-coach and a fat man in front of you opens the window, thus getting the pleasant air himself, and giving you the cinders, an excellent plan is to raise your newspaper directly between you and the onslaught of dirt, and read it with absorbed attention. This causes a superb funnel. The draught and the dirt pour copiously down the neck of the villain, and unless he is a hard-boiled rhinoceros he will close the casement.

Another extremely common and reprehensible habit is that of a host who gives a dinner-party and arranges that the guests immediately after the feast is over shall repair to a room that would answer admirably for cold storage, but is no place for immortal souls. After eating, one is naturally cold, and should go into a warm room. This is easily proved by the fact that if an open fire is burning on the hearth of the room to which the dinner-guests adjourn, every one instinctively makes for that fire. Usually a large man reaches it first, stands with his back to it, and addresses the company for fifteen minutes.

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Dining-rooms and their successors should never be cold. (There is only one thing worse than a cold dining-room, and that is a cold bathroom.) I felt a strong affection for a convivial and cheerful guest, who, at a dinner-party, in the midst of winter, when the host enquired, "Shall I open a window?" replied: "No! Shut all the windows and open all the bottles."

We are told it is unhealthy to be in a warm room. But how much better it is to be unhealthy and deliciously comfortable, than to be perfectly healthy and perfectly miserable. My advice to the fresh-air crank is to stay outdoors, where he belongs, for he has never been civilised. If he must enter the house or the hall, and must have fresh air, let him open the window on his own back, and let us hope that he catches a terrific cold.

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